



REVISION SHOWS U.S. GROWING AS FAST AS IN 2011

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RUSSIAN OLIGARCH KHODORKOVSKY IS FREE IN GERMANY

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Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News Email:news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:+297 582-7800 Saturday, December 21, 2013

MOVING TARGET!

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Potential victims of credit card fraud tied to Target's security breach said they had trouble contacting the discounter through its website and call centers.



A Target retail chain logo is seen on the exterior of a Target store in Watertown, Mass. (AP Photo/Steven Senne)

Angry Target customers expressed their displeasure in comments on the company's Facebook page. Some even threatened to stop shopping at the store. Target's CEO Gregg Steinhafel apologized through a statement issued on Friday.

The retailer also said it's working hard to resolve the problem and is adding more workers to field calls and help solve website issues.

And the discounter began offering 10 percent off for customers who shop in its stores on Saturday and Sunday and free credit-monitoring services to those who've been affected by the issue.

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A YEAR TO CHEER

President Barack Obama smiles as he prepares to answer a question during an end-of-the year news conference in the Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House in Washington, Friday, Dec. 20, 2013. Obama will depart later for his annual Christmas vacation trip. It's the first time in his presidency that his departure plans have not been delayed by legislative action in Washington.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

As 2013 Winds Down, Obama Looks Ahead To 'A Year Of Action'

JACKIE CALMES

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WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama hailed the growing strength in the economy at an end-of-the-year news conference Friday, but pledged to use 2014 to broaden the recovery to more of America's

citizens.

"We head into next year with an economy that is stronger than it was when we started the year," Obama said before heading to Hawaii later in the day for a two-week vacation. "I firmly believe that 2014 can be a break-

through year for America." Obama said that despite problems with HealthCare.gov, more than 1 million people had signed up for new health care insurance in the last several months. And he said the economy grew last summer at the fastest pace in two years.

The president said he did not view 2013 as the worst year in his presidency and expressed optimism that more can be done, despite the failure of Congress to pass more of his agenda.

Continued on page 3

S&P cuts EU credit rating

DAVID JOLLY

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BRUSSELS - European Union leaders gathering here for a summit meeting Friday barely had time to congratulate themselves on their new banking deal before getting a slap in the face from the ratings agency Standard & Poor's. The agency removed the bloc's top-level AAA long-term credit rating, taking it down a peg to AA+, citing "the overall weaker creditworthiness of the EU's 28 member states."

Friday afternoon, S&P issued a clarification, emphasizing that the downgrade applied only to the EU's borrowing as a supranational body and that the move had no effect on individual member states.

The timing of the announcement was inauspicious, coming on the last day of a meeting of EU officials and heads of state, whose capstone achievement was an agreement for the creation of a European system for winding down failed banks. That plan, despite limits that critics have been quick to point out, was supposed to demonstrate the bloc's commitment to building a banking union, locking member states into an ever-tighter economic embrace.

"We believe the financial profile of the EU has deteriorated, and that cohesion among EU members has lessened," it said in explaining the downgrade.

The firm also pointed to disputes over the EU's budget and to Britain's plan for a referendum on remaining in the union as signs that solidarity was under strain. The EU's borrowings of 56 billion euros, or \$76 billion, are separate from those of member states and from finance programs like the European Financial Stabilization Mechanism and the European Atomic Energy Community. The ratings agency said 80 percent of the borrowing was currently extended to Portugal and Ireland, a legacy of the sovereign bailouts.

Canadian court strikes down anti-prostitution laws

CHARMAINE NORONHA
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada's highest court struck down the country's anti-prostitution laws Friday, a victory for sex workers who had argued that a ban on brothels and other measures made their profession more dangerous.

The ruling drew criticism from the conservative government and religious leaders.

The court, ruling in a case

fessor at McGill University, said the court found that the law did nothing to increase safety, but suggested in its ruling that more finely tailored rules might pass constitutional scrutiny in the future.

"Some of the (current) provisions actually limit sex workers' ability to protect themselves," Leckey said. The court found that Canada's prostitution laws violated the guarantee to life, liberty and security of the

the world, particularly in Europe, are having similar debates.

Earlier this month, France's lower house of parliament passed a bill that would decriminalize prostitutes and fine their customers. Some argue such laws empower prostitutes against their potential exploiters but others — including some prostitutes — say it only drives their practice further underground and makes it more dangerous.

of Appeal ruling last year that, among other findings, struck down the ban on brothels on the grounds that it endangered sex workers by forcing them onto the streets.

"I am shocked and amazed that sex work and the sex work laws that affect our lives on a daily basis will within a year not cause us harm anymore," said Amy Lebovitch, who brought the case along with Terri-Jean Bedford and Valerie



Terri-Jean Bedford gives a victory sign as she talks to reporters at the Supreme Court of Canada in Ottawa Friday morning, Dec. 20, 2013 after learning Canada's highest court struck down the country's prostitution laws in their entirety in a unanimous 9-0 ruling. The retired dominatrix is one of the three principles in the Supreme Court case. The ruling is a victory for sex workers seeking safer working conditions because it found that the laws violated the guarantee to life, liberty and security of the person. But the decision also gives Parliament a one-year reprieve to respond with new legislation.

(AP Photo/Adrian Wyld)

brought by three women in the sex trade, struck down all three of Canada's prostitution-related laws: bans on keeping a brothel, making a living from prostitution, and street soliciting. The ruling won't take effect immediately, however, because the court gave Parliament a year to respond with new legislation, and said the existing laws would remain in place until then. The decision threw the door open for a wide and complex debate on how Canada should regulate prostitution, which isn't in itself illegal in the country. □

Robert Leckey, a law pro-

person. For instance, it said the law prohibiting people from making a living from prostitution is too broad. It is intended "to target pimps and the parasitic, exploitative conduct in which they engage," the ruling said.

"The law, however, punishes everyone who lives on the avails of prostitution without distinguishing between those who exploit prostitutes and those who could increase the safety and security of prostitutes, for example, legitimate drivers, managers, or bodyguards."

Other countries around

Sex-trade workers in Canada stepped up their fight for safer working conditions following the serial killings of prostitutes by Robert Pickton in British Columbia. Pickton was convicted in 2007 of killing six women whose remains were found on his farm outside Vancouver. Years earlier, authorities had closed down a Vancouver house for sex workers that many had considered a safe haven just as the disappearance of several prostitutes began raising fears that a serial killer was prowling the streets.

The Supreme Court ruling upheld an Ontario Court

Scott. Justice Minister Peter MacKay said the government was "concerned" by the decision and is "exploring all possible options to ensure the criminal law continues to address the significant harms that flow from prostitution to communities, those engaged in prostitution, and vulnerable persons."

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, writing on behalf of the court, said Canada's social landscape has changed since 1990, when the Supreme Court upheld a ban on street solicitation. □

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As 2013 Winds Down,

Obama Looks Ahead To 'A Year Of Action'

Continued from Front

He noted the recent budget deal as evidence that there can be more cooperation. "It's probably too early to declare an outbreak of bipartisanship, but it's also fair to say that we are not condemned to endless gridlock," Obama said. "2014 needs to be a year of action." Obama seemed to offer a scaled-back sense of ambition for the remainder of his presidency, saying he wants to make sure he continues to make a difference, big and small, in people's lives. "At this point, my goal every single day," he said, is to make sure that "we're delivering something. Not everything, because this is a long haul."

He said he would try in the years ahead to make sure that families feel greater opportunity, that the country's finances continue to stabilize, that the housing market continues to improve, and that wages are "inchng up" a bit. "If those things are happening, I'll take it," Obama said.

Obama also was asked about a federal judge's observation, echoed by a



President Barack Obama fields questions during a news conference at the White House in Washington, Dec. 20, 2013. Obama answered questions on issues including NSA reform, the Affordable Care Act rollout and debt ceiling negotiations in Congress ahead of a two-week vacation in Hawaii.

(Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

report by five expert advisers, that the bulk collection of telephone data collected by the government had yielded little or no success in detecting imminent acts of terrorism. He answered by thanking the advisory committee. "What we are doing now is evaluating all the recommendations that were made," he said.

Obama said he would spend the next few weeks evaluating what he has heard.

"I'll make a pretty definitive statement" in January, Obama said, adding, "I'm taking this pretty seriously." He talked specifically about the "metadata" program to collect the records of telephone numbers of

all calls made around the country. He said the National Security Agency had concluded that it "was pretty important to track" any call that came into the United States from a known terrorist. "It's important to note that in all the reviews of this program that have been done," he said, "there was no evidence

of inappropriate action by the NSA."

But Obama said it was clear that U.S. citizens were concerned. "The question we are going to have to ask is, can we accomplish the same goal" in different ways "that give the public more confidence" that the NSA is not "snooping around," he said. □

Senate wraps up briskly after a tumultuous year

JEREMY W. PETERS

© 2013 New York Times

WASHINGTON - The final day of the Senate's 2013 session ended on an anticlimactic note Friday as senators pressed the pause button on the bickering that had kept the chamber nearly paralyzed this year. The day opened with a bit of a scare when Sen. Harry Reid, the majority leader, was hospitalized in the early morning after falling ill. Reid, who just turned 74, remained in the hospital for most of the day and was at home by the evening. Reid's spokesman, Adam Jentleson, said the senator went to the hospital as a precaution. "The doctors diagnosed

him as exhausted, not anything more serious, and have cleared him to go back to work," he said. "He spent today resting, talking to family, friends and colleagues, reading the news and discussing Senate business."

Reid's absence left the Senate's No. 2 Democrat, Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, to preside over the business of the day, which moved forward quickly after a tumultuous two weeks of procedural delays and stalling tactics that threatened to keep senators in Washington until Christmas. Republicans had been holding up several of President Barack Obama's nominees out of frustration



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., center, joined at left by Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin, D-Ill., talks to reporters about the final work of the Senate as their legislative year comes to a close, at the Capitol in Washington.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

that Democrats took away their ability to filibuster most confirmations. It was unclear until late Thursday night whether they would agree to stand down and allow the votes to go forward.

In the end, they relented. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was giddy about the prospect of getting out of the Capitol, joking with reporters that the capitulation was no surprise to him. "Usually the spine removals happen on Thursday night," he said, referring to lawmakers' nearly unshakable desire to be back home in their states by Friday.

After a brief session Friday, senators approved a handful of nominees: John

A. Koskinen as commissioner of Internal Revenue Service, Alejandro Mayorkas as deputy secretary of homeland security and Brian J. Davis as a U.S. district judge for the Middle District of Florida.

The biggest nomination - Janet L. Yellen as chairwoman of the Federal Reserve - was put off until January. Senators agreed to hold a vote on her confirmation, which is expected to pass easily, when they return to Washington on Jan. 6. □

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Judge strikes down Utah's same-sex marriage ban

BRADY McCOMBS

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A federal judge struck down Utah's same-sex marriage ban Friday in a decision that brings a growing shift toward allowing gay marriage to a conservative state where the Mormon church has long been against it. The Salt Lake County clerk's office started issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Deputy Clerk Dahnelle Burton-Lee said the district attorney authorized her office to begin issuing the licenses but she couldn't immediately say how many have been issued so far. Just hours earlier, U.S. District Judge Robert J. Shelby issued a 53-page ruling saying Utah's law passed by voters in 2004 violates gay and lesbian couples' rights to due process and

equal protection under the 14th Amendment.

Shelby said the state failed to show that allowing same-sex marriages would affect opposite-sex marriages in any way.

"In the absence of such evidence, the State's unsupported fears and speculations are insufficient to justify the State's refusal to dignify the family relationships of its gay and lesbian citizens," Shelby wrote.

Ryan Bruckman, a spokesman for the Utah attorney general's office, said the office will appeal the ruling and is asking for a stay that would stop marriage licenses from being issued to same-sex couples in the meantime. Meanwhile, dozens of same-sex couples lined up to get marriage licenses at the Salt Lake County clerk's office. □

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A plea to deny gunmen their quest for infamy

JACK HEALY

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DENVER - Call him the gunman. Call him the killer or the perpetrator, the defendant or the assailant. Only, the survivors urge, do not say his name.

This is the new plea after another shooting has upended a community in suburban Denver and turned a high school into a bloody crime scene. As people grope for responses, many families of victims and law enforcement officials have begun urging journalists and public officials to avoid using the gunmen's names and photos in public.

For families, it is a small way to fight back. Their hope is that refusing to name the actors will mute the effects of their actions, and prevent other angry, troubled young men from being inspired by the infamy of those who opened fire in Columbine High School, Virginia Tech or Newtown, Conn.

The effort is also about finding some relief. Almost a year after Dawn Hochsprung, the principal of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, was killed, her daughter Erica Lafferty said she walked into the lobby of MSNBC to give an interview. It was the

day state investigators had released their report on the massacre, and Lafferty said she looked up at the television screens to see the hollow face of the 20-year-old

When President Barack Obama flew to Colorado in July 2012 to memorialize the 12 people killed in an Aurora movie theater, he agreed not to mention

Robinson spent nearly 45 minutes describing, moment by moment, gunshot by gunshot, how an 18-year-old student armed with a pump-action shotgun had charged into his high school last Friday and opened fire. He critically wounded a classmate, 17-year-old Claire Davis, before fatally shooting himself.

Robinson discussed how the gunman had sought revenge on a debate coach who had disciplined him in September. How he had carried a machete and three gasoline bombs. How the entire rampage had lasted just 80 seconds. Then, a reporter asked the gunman's birth date - a routine detail - and the sheriff paused. He said he wanted to offer an opinion. "I will tell you that I am no longer inclined nor will I speak his name in public," he said.

As Davis remains in a coma, law enforcement officials have continued to offer new details about plans by the gunman, Karl Pierson, to cause "the maximum amount of harm." They say he carried 125 rounds of ammunition, and had scrawled the numbers and letters of five classrooms on his arm. Also on his arm, in

permanent ink, was a Latin phrase meaning "the die is cast."

Despite the urging of some families, few news outlets have excised the names of killers from their coverage. It is one of the most basic facts, and a difficult one to omit as reporters try to unravel questions about the mental health and private anger of these gunmen, and whether they had given any warning signs. And of course, arrest records, public inquests and legal documents contain the gunmen's names.

"There's a compelling public interest in naming the gunman and what his circumstances were and how he pulled off the shooting," said Kelly McBride, a media ethicist at the Poynter Institute. "If you don't name the gunman and try and understand how he got his guns, what his motivations are and what might have prevented this, I don't think that we'll be any better off."

Would it even have an effect? Social scientists have found a nexus between suicides and news coverage, suggesting that extensive stories detailing methods and motives may drive others to kill themselves in similar ways. □



Tom Teves kisses his wife, Caren during a news conference with families of the victims of the 02012 shooting at a movie theater in Aurora, Colo. In the wake of recent mass shootings, many families of victims and law enforcement officials have begun urging journalists and public officials to avoid using the gunmen's names and photos in public.

(Matthew Staver /The New York Times)

who had shot her mother. "Why do I have to read his name? Why do I have to hear his name?" Lafferty said. "It's so painful to see." Those names are stricken from many Facebook memorial sites and victims' support message boards.

the gunman's name. And Saturday, the sheriff investigating a shooting inside the halls of Arapahoe High School in suburban Denver announced that he had made the same decision. Facing a bank of microphones, Sheriff Grayson

New York City: Smoking ban to include e-cigarettes

JAKE PEARSON

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New Yorkers who turned to electronic cigarettes to keep smoking in restaurants, offices or even libraries are down to their last few puffs

on e-cigarettes that the evidence on whether nicotine inhalers are truly safe is insufficient. She said allowing the devices in places where cigarettes are now banned also could "re-normalize" smoking and

up a chemical solution and emit vapors while giving smokers their nicotine fix. Manufacturers say the mist is harmless, and most scientists agree that regular smokers who switch to e-cigarettes are lowering



In this photo made with multiple flash exposures, a model pulls on an electronic cigarette backstage before the Chado Ralph Rucci fashion show in New York. New York's City Council voted 43-8 Thursday on legislation that includes electronic cigarettes in the city's ban on smoking in bars, restaurants and other indoor public spaces.

(AP Photo/John Minchillo)

in such places.

The City Council's voted 43-8 Thursday to include e-cigarettes in the ban on smoking in public indoor places. Outgoing Mayor Michael Bloomberg is expected to sign the measure. The ban would then take effect in four months. Council Speaker Christine Quinn said before the vote

undermine the public perception that the habit is now acceptable only in the privacy of one's own home. "We don't want a step backward with that," she said.

The vote came amid sharp disagreement within public health circles over how to treat e-cigarettes. The tobacco-free smokes heat

their health risk substantially.

The devices, though, aren't heavily regulated. And experts say consumers can't yet be sure whether they are safe either for users or people exposed to second-hand vapor puffs.

Like regular cigarettes, the nicotine in e-cigarettes is also highly addictive. □

Treatment of diplomat was typical in US

COLLEEN LONG

TOM HAYS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It has sparked protests outside the American embassy in New Delhi. Burnings of President Barack Obama's photo. And angry speeches by Indian officials.

But the arrest — and, yes, even the strip search — of an Indian diplomat accused of visa fraud also revealed a simple and long-standing reality of the U.S. justice system: Everyone charged with a crime here is supposed to be treated

the same, whether wealthy or poor, prominent or ordinary, citizen or foreigner.

"There is a remarkable and almost charming egalitarianism in it," said New York City defense attorney Ron Kuby.

"Everybody is treated in exactly the same disrespectful, casually brutal and arrogant fashion."

The United States is the only place where "the rich as well as the poor get to sleep on cold floors and urinate in overflowing toilets — together."

Indian officials have been

angry over the way federal marshals handled Devyani Khobragade, the country's deputy consul general in New York, calling the treatment degrading and inhumane. Yet most Americans would find the procedures fairly typical for a criminal case — though certainly not pleasant.

Khobragade, who was arrested last week outside her daughter's school, complained that she was strip-searched and held in a cell "with drug addicts" until her appearance before a judge. □

Fury and frustration over Target chain data breach

Continued from Front

The Minneapolis-based discounter said that while it's only heard of "very few" reports of fraud, it's reaching out to customers who made purchases by swiping their cards when the scam occurred. The company also said it's continuing its investigation into the matter.

"We take this crime seriously," Steinhafel said in the statement.

Target's statements come after the second largest U.S. retailer acknowledged Thursday that data connected to about 40 million credit and debit card accounts was stolen as part of a breach that began over the Thanksgiving weekend.

The theft is the second-largest credit card breach in U.S. history, exceeded only by a scam that began in 2005 involving retailer TJX Cos. That incident affected at least 45.7 million card users.

Target disclosed the theft a day after reports that the company was investigating a breach. The retailer's data-security troubles and its ensuing public relations nightmare threaten to drive off holiday shoppers during the company's busiest time of year.

On Friday, Target reiterated that the stolen data included customer names, credit and debit card numbers, card expiration dates and the embedded code on the magnetic strip found on the backs of cards, Target said.

There was no indication the three- or four-digit security numbers visible on the back of the card were affected, Target said. It also said Friday there was no indication that the stolen data included a customer's birth date or social security number. The data breach did not affect online purchases, the company said.

Target also said it didn't believe that PIN numbers to customers' debit cards have been compromised. So that means someone cannot visit an ATM with a fraudulent card and withdraw cash, it said.

Target hasn't disclosed exactly how the breach occurred but said it has fixed the problem.

Given the millions of dollars that companies such as Target spend implementing credit-card security measures each year, Avivah Litan, a security analyst with Gartner Research said she believes the theft may have been an inside job.

"The fact this breach can happen with all of their security in place is really alarming," Litan said.

Other experts theorize that Target's network was hacked and infiltrated from the outside.

Target, which has almost 1,800 stores in the U.S. and 124 in Canada, said it immediately told authorities and financial institutions once it became aware of the breach on Dec. 15. The company is teaming with a third-party forensics firm to investigate and prevent future problems.

Data breaches tied to credit card fraud are on the rise, according to Javelin Strategy & Research, a San Francisco-based financial services firm.

According to the firm's report, nearly 16 million consumers were notified that their card information was compromised in 2012, while the number of victims of fraud increased more than three-fold from 2010 to 2012. That resulted in \$4.8 billion in fraud losses.

Al Pascual, a senior analyst of security risk and fraud at Javelin, noted that 28 percent of customers who are notified that their cards were breached typically suffer fraud in the same year. "This is going to spawn credit card fraud," he said. □

US Financial Front

Revision shows U.S. growing at fastest rate since 2011

ANNIE LOWREY

© 2013 New York Times

WASHINGTON - The U.S. economy grew at a surprisingly robust 4.1 percent annual pace in the third quarter, the Commerce Department said Friday. That is the strongest growth in nearly two years and only the third time the economy has expanded that quickly since 2006.

It is the latest evidence that the generally sluggish recovery is gaining strength, although economists noted that the underlying rate of growth remains at a trot, not a gallop - a pace of about 2.5 percent a year. "We continue to believe that underlying growth will remain on a moderate trend," said Joshua Shapiro, the chief U.S. economist at MFR Inc., a consulting firm. "The outlook is greatly dependent on the direction of the labor market, and hence the path of wage and salary growth and the ability of consumers to expand spending."

With stronger growth, the job market is improving, but earnings and employment remain far from healthy levels, economists think. The unemployment rate fell to 7 percent in November from 7.8 percent a year earlier. But that improvement is in no small part because of workers leaving the labor force, and many working households are still struggling with stagnant incomes.

Still, the Commerce Department data, which raised the estimate of third-quarter growth from an earlier 3.6 percent, shows more evidence of faster and broad-based growth that might lead to a healthier labor market - and more solid growth - in 2014.

The refined estimate is based on "more complete source data," the department said, that showed personal consumption and business investment to be higher than previously thought. Those figures came in "dramatically better than initially expected after an unusually large se-

ries of surprises," said Morgan Stanley economists in a note to clients, calling the government release a generally "strong report." Economists had expected the final estimate of growth to be unchanged from the earlier 3.6 percent. But the data showed that consumers have stepped up their spending on health care, houses and cars as the strengthening recovery has led businesses to hire and rising home values have improved household balance sheets.

The Commerce Department increased its estimate of consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of economic activity, to a 2 percent rate from 1.4 percent.

The economy's general strength has spurred the Federal Reserve to begin to unwind its bond-buying program, cutting its monthly purchases of Treasury and mortgage-backed debt. "In light of the cumulative progress toward maximum employment and the improvement in the outlook for labor market conditions, the committee decided to modestly reduce the pace of its asset purchases," the Fed said in a statement this week.

The third-quarter growth came from a broad range of other sources: personal consumption, exports, investment in new factories and houses, state and local government spending and a rise in business inventories. Federal spending cuts and rising imports were a drag on growth, the department said.

Economists expect growth to slow in the fourth quarter, in part because some of the upswing has resulted from businesses building up their inventories.

While Wall Street "has been concerned with the swing in fiscal policy between 2013 and 2014, they should be focused on the swing likely in inventory," said Steven Ricchiuto, the chief economist at Mizuho Securities USA. "A lot of this inventory is cars and light

trucks."

Even so, economists said that the underlying pace of growth remains strong enough to expect a better 2014 than 2013, given increasing consumer spending and stronger business fundamentals, including

high corporate profits.

"The third-quarter's stellar growth rate is not destined to be repeated, but is it a harbinger of a better year for the economy in 2014," said Douglas Handler, the chief U.S. economist for IHS Global Insight, cit-

ing strength in the housing market and in exports.

The St. Louis-based forecasting firm Macroeconomic Advisers expects growth to slow to a 2.3 percent pace in the fourth quarter, before picking up again next year. □



A covered vehicle sits in part of the new paint shop at Chrysler's Sterling Heights Assembly Plant in Sterling Heights, Mich. The Commerce Department releases final third-quarter gross domestic product on Friday, Dec. 20, 2013.

(AP Photo/Paul Sancya)

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Daughter of jailed ex-leader in Ukraine urges pardon

ALISON SMALE
ANDREW HIGGINS
© 2013 New York Times

KIEV, Ukraine - As Russia's best-known political prisoner, Mikhail B. Khodorkovsky, arrived in Germany on Friday at the end of a whirlwind 24-hour passage to freedom, the daughter of Ukraine's most prominent political prisoner urged the president here to follow in the footsteps of the Russian president and set her mother free.

"He really should follow this example," Evgenia Tymoshenko, daughter of former Prime Minister Yulia A. Tymoshenko, said in an interview, referring to the Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovych. "He has the power to pardon, to sign the decree, even without her request."

Yulia Tymoshenko, who, like Khodorkovsky, made her fortune from the disintegration of the former Soviet energy network, was jailed two years ago on what her supporters have said are blatant political charges brought after Yanukovych defeated her in elections for Ukraine's presidency in 2010.

Tymoshenko, 53, was supposed to get out of a prison hospital and fly to Berlin for surgery on her spine in tandem with a far-reaching political and trade deal that Ukraine was expected to sign with Europe last month. Instead, Yanukovych abandoned the deal, and with it any hint of her release.

And so Friday it was Khodorkovsky, the former Russian oil tycoon, who arrived in Berlin instead of Tymoshenko

after being pardoned by President Vladimir Putin of Russia. Khodorkovsky was flown on a private jet arranged by a former German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

Tymoshenko, who was sentenced to seven years in prison after being convicted in 2011 of abuse of power as prime minister, is still leader of the Fatherland party, one of the opposition groups that have led more than three weeks of sustained popular protest against Yanukovych for refusing to sign the deal with Europe.

Two giant photographs of the imprisoned woman, with her trademark braided blond hair, hang from a giant Christmas tree in Independence Square in Kiev, the capital, where at times hundreds of thou-

sands have braved winter cold to demand a brighter future.

Not everyone believes that

the images of Tymoshenko, once a wealthy businesswoman, should hang so prominently over the pro-

tests, which surprised even opposition leaders when they began in late November. □



People sit around a fire preparing food near a Christmas tree at a tent camp at Independence Square in Kiev, Ukraine, Dec. 20, 2013. Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych moved on several fronts Thursday to reassert his domination in the country, two days after receiving what appeared to be an economic lifeline in the form of at least \$15 billion in aid from Russia and a substantial reduction in the price of Russian natural gas.

(Sergey Ponomarev/The New York Times)

Rebels said to control some S. Sudan oil fields

CHARLTON
JASON STRAZIUSO
Associated Press

JUBA, South Sudan (AP) — Armed rebels were said to be in control of some of South Sudan's oil fields Friday, raising questions of how long the country's oil will flow and whether Sudan could enter the conflict which showed no signs of ending.

President Salva Kiir implored his country to turn away from ethnic violence and met Friday with foreign ministers from neighboring states, including Kenya and Ethiopia, who flew into Juba, the capital, to help calm tensions after a week of ethnic strife

DOKI

that is estimated to have killed hundreds. Kiir did not speak publicly, but the government's Twitter feed attributed this quote to him: "Those who may want to take the law into their hands, the long arm of the government will get them." The U.N. Security Council expressed "grave alarm" at the rapidly deteriorating security crisis, condemned targeted ethnic violence and demanded an end to the fighting. The U.N.'s most powerful body urged the president and ousted vice president Riek Machar "to demonstrate leadership in bringing a swift and peaceful resolution to this crisis." France's U.N. Ambassador,

Gerard Araud, the current council president, told reporters that Kiir and the widow of South Sudan's rebel hero John Garang, who led the country's fight for independence, have agreed to enter an unconditional dialogue.

There was no word yet from Machar, who is believed to be in hiding.

Kiir, an ethnic Dinka, earlier this week said an attempted coup had triggered the violence, and the blame was placed on Machar, an ethnic Nuer. But officials have since said a fight between Dinka and Nuer members of the presidential guard triggered the fighting Sunday night that

has since spread across the country. Machar's ouster from the country's No. 2 political position earlier this year had stoked ethnic tensions.

The Security Council said the violence resulted from a "political dispute among the country's political leaders" that could affect not only South Sudan, but neighboring countries and the entire region.

"The political crisis could lead to a general and political civil war if we do not solve it very quickly through dialogue," Araud warned. Fighting continued to spread on Friday in Jonglei and Unity state, an oil area. □

Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky a free man

JIM HEINTZ

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — In a few breathtaking hours, one-time oil baron Mikhail Khodorkovsky went from being a prisoner locked away for a decade in the remote depths of northern Russia to being a free man in Berlin. As he sped between those extremes, questions trailed behind.

Most prominently: Why Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to pardon the man who was once Russia's richest and one of the few with both the boldness and resources to challenge him.

Putin said he decided to approve Khodorkovsky's pardon application and let him walk free on Friday for humanitarian reasons — his mother is seriously ill. The way he announced it, in a scrum of journalists after his annual marathon news conference less than 24 hours earlier, had an air of spur-of-the-moment.

But there appears to have been considerable calculation behind it, and analysts saw it as a show of power and arrogance by the man who has dominated Russian politics since the turn of the millennium. In the first burst of surprise after the pardon was announced, many speculated that Putin wanted to soften Russia's baleful image in the countdown to the Winter Olympics, his signature project, which starts Feb. 7 in Sochi.

"Rubbish," wrote Lilia Shevtsova of the Carnegie Moscow think-tank. "Putin has been all along demonstrating all signs that he does not care any more what the world is thinking of him. He has been showing the opposite: that he views world leaders as pa-

thetic weaklings who can be ignored."

Although Putin is hypersensitive to opposition and has launched a series of mea-

revenge for defying Putin's dictate that the country's narrow circle of billionaire tycoons, dubbed "oligarchs," stay out of

politics. Behind bars, he became the leading symbol of anxiety about Russia's questionable rule of law.

But despite becoming a much sought-after columnist in prison, writing for leading Russian media and corresponding with prominent Russian authors, Khodorkovsky often seemed overshadowed by new controversies — the imprisonment of art-punk provocateurs Pussy Riot, the arrest of Greenpeace activists, the passage of a law banning "gay propaganda" for minors.

Notably, during the four-hour news conference Thursday, Khodorkovsky's name didn't even come up, though one question was about the possibility of another trial related to his former Yukos oil company. His release and arrival in Germany on Friday vaults him back into the spotlight. But Putin, who has built much of his tough image on denouncing "interference" from the West, is unlikely to worry much about criticism from afar and it is unclear if Khodorkovsky ever intends to return to

Russia.

"I am very much waiting for the minute when I can embrace my nearest and personally shake the hands of all my friends and colleagues," the former oil tycoon said in a short statement a few hours after his arrival.

He added a few details about the process that freed him, saying that he filed the pardon application on Nov. 12 and that the question of admitting guilt wasn't raised.

Khodorkovsky also thanked former German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who met him at the Berlin airport, for his "personal participation in my fate." A statement from Genscher's office said he met Khodorkovsky while head of the German Council on Foreign Relations and agreed to a request from Khodorkovsky's lawyers to try to help secure his release.

OBO Bettermann, a German energy company that provided the plane that flew Khodorkovsky to Berlin, said it offered it on Genscher's request. □



Photo provided by the owners of the website khodorkovsky.ru shows former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, right, welcoming Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky at the airport in Berlin-Schoenefeld Friday, Dec. 20, 2013. After spending 10 years in Russian jails for what many in the West believe were trumped-up offenses Khodorkovsky left prison a free man Friday and immediately flew to Germany.

(AP Photo/khodorkovsky.ru)

sures over the past year and a half that chill dissent, he appears to have calculated that 10 years as an inmate has tamed the 50-year-old Khodorkovsky. "Putin understood that Khodorkovsky is not a revolutionary, that his priority goal for all of what remains of his life is the desire not to return to the place he was for the last 10 years," wrote Stanislav Belkovsky, a political analyst and former Kremlin insider.

Khodorkovsky's arrest by special forces who stormed his plane at a Siberian airport and his subsequent trials were widely seen as

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Philippine mayor among 4 killed at Manila airport

OLIVER TEVES

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — A gunman attacked a Philippine mayor as he left the

The gunman fired on Labangan Mayor Ukol Talumpa outside Terminal 3 at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport, named

to be a relatively well-guarded facility. Talumpa had arrived from Zamboanga del Sur, the southern province where Labangan

is located. There was no word on a possible motive, but violent attacks linked to political rivalries, family feuds and business disputes are common in the Philippines, and have left hundreds of people dead over the years. Talumpa himself had survived at least two earlier assassination attempts, according to local media reports. The mayor and his wife were declared dead on arrival at a nearby hospital along with a 1 1/2-year-old boy and a 25-year-old man, said the airport's general manager, Jose Angel Honrado.

Local radio reports said that the man was a nephew of the mayor, but that the boy was a bystander with no relation to Talumpa. At least five other people were wounded, including a niece of the mayor and a 3-year-old girl who sustained a head wound, hos-

pital authorities said.

An uncle of the dead boy, Felipe Lirasan, told DZMM radio that the child's family was staying at his home for Christmas. "Then this happened," he said, his voice breaking. "There is nothing that we can do."

Honrado said that investigators were trying to determine how many attackers were involved. Witnesses, however, saw only one gunman, who sped away on a waiting motorcycle that was driven by another man, Honrado said.

An airport car rental dispatcher said one of the two men on the motorcycle was wearing a cap and what appeared to be a police uniform.

"When shots rang out, the passengers all rushed inside the terminal," said the dispatcher, who spoke to a local radio station but didn't give his name. □



A couple look at a van which was caught in a crossfire during a daring ambush of a southern Philippine town mayor Friday Dec. 20, 2013 at suburban Pasay city, south of Manila, Philippines. The assailants rode a motorcycle and fired at Labangan Mayor Ukol Talumpa and his wife as they stepped out of Terminal 3, said Manila airport General Manager Jose Angel Honrado.

(AP Photo/Bullit Marquez)

country's main airport on Friday along with crowds of Christmas travelers, killing him, his wife, a child and another man, authorities and witnesses said.

after President Benigno Aquino III's father, who was assassinated there 30 years ago. The terminal handles international and domestic flights, and is supposed

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Bolivia expels Danish group for meddling

Associated Press

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — A Danish foundation is being expelled from Bolivia for taking sides in a leadership struggle for control of one of the nation's biggest indigenous organizations, the government announced Friday.

President aide Juan Ramon Quintana said that Copenhagen-based IBIS

"abused" the government's hospitality and has been intervening in the nation's internal politics instead of focusing on its mission of development work. President Evo Morales is Bolivia's first Indian president but he's shown little tolerance for criticism from the nation's indigenous majority. IBIS' office in La Paz said it

was taken by surprise by its expulsion and is analyzing how to respond.

In a statement issued by IBIS Secretary General Vagn Berthelsen, the organization said it is "very surprised" by the move and has worked to cooperate with Bolivian government agencies during its more than 30 years in the country. □

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Helicopter gunships used in Mexico resort battle



In this image released by the police, soldiers stand next to a charred vehicle in Mexico. Two government helicopter gunships opened fire on 10 vehicles fleeing a luxury beach condo complex during this week's gun battle at the Gulf of California resort of Puerto Penasco, Mexican authorities said.

(AP Photo/Oaxaca State Police)

MARK STEVENSON
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Two government helicopter gunships opened fire on 10 vehicles fleeing a luxury beach condo complex during this week's gun battle at the Gulf of California resort of Puerto Penasco, Mexican authorities said.

New details emerged about the raging gun battle that ensued after federal forces tried to capture a reputed top lieutenant of the Sinaloa drug cartel who was staying at a beachfront villa.

Mexico's federal police said late Thursday that two government Blackhawk helicopters fired on at least 10 vehicles as they tried to flee the complex with drug cartel operator Gonzalo Inzunza. The vehicles were hit by gunfire in the Wednesday battle and were "left useless, causing the assailants to disperse." Five presumed cartel gunmen were killed in the battle.

Police found 14 sniper or assault rifles at the scene, which one federal official confirmed were of heavy caliber. Two federal officers were wounded in the gunfight.

The bullet-ridden, burned-out vehicles were left just outside the complex, which federal police did not identify. But Puerto Penasco city spokesman

Cristobal Garcia confirmed Friday that the shootout actually began inside the Bella Sirena complex, where Inzunza was staying at a beachfront villa. The resort has units for both sale and rent, but it was unclear if the reputed capo owned or was renting the unit in which he was staying.

Garcia insisted that "these

are not people who live in Puerto Penasco ... perhaps they were here on a holiday."

But federal police said Inzunza, 42, "has set up his center of operations in Puerto Penasco," to run drug-trafficking networks that stretched through at least seven other states, from the Caribbean coast

state of Quintana Roo in Mexico's southeast to Baja California in the country's northwest.

They said Inzunza "had a personal relationship with Ismael ('El Mayo') Zambada," long viewed as the No. 2 leader of the Sinaloa cartel, after Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. Inzunza's body was not found at the scene, and federal officials said they believed the fleeing gunmen took his dead or wounded body with them, as cartel gunmen sometimes do with fallen gang members or leaders. Federal police said late Thursday that an analysis of blood stains found in the vehicles show that Inzunza was among those killed or wounded.

Drug cartel shootouts at Mexico's beach resorts generally have been rare, though some have been reported in the past in the Pacific coast resort of Acapulco. Prosecutors in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz said Friday they had found seven bodies dumped on a beach just south of the seaside city of Veracruz.

They did not provide identities or a cause of death.

In the past, top drug traffickers have sometimes been caught, killed or almost caught at beach resorts, but they appear to have largely left resorts and their tourists alone. No foreigners, visitors or residents were harmed in the Puerto Penasco raid.

Raul Benitez, a security expert at Mexico's National Autonomous University, said Inzunza, who had a 3-million-peso (\$230,000 reward) on his head, may have chosen Puerto Penasco not for the sun and sand but because it is located about an hour from the U.S. border.

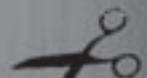
The resort is located in Sonora state, which has been relatively free of the drug violence that has plagued other northern border states. The Sinaloa cartel may have chosen the Sonora-Arizona area as a base because other border areas are under the control of rival cartels or feeling the effects of government crackdowns, authorities said. □



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AT

Clock ticking a bit too fast for some Cubans

PETER ORSI
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — In Cuba, time is in the eye of the beholder.

For many islanders, the days still pass slowly under an enervating sun. After a half century of Communism, they see time frozen in the facades of crumbling colonial mansions, the chrome of 1950s automobiles and the face of a stopped airport clock. They feel little sense of urgency. Others say the pace of life has quickened considerably in the three years since President Raul Castro admonished Cubans to embrace economic reforms "without haste, but without pause." Suddenly, automobile traffic is picking up in Havana. There are appointments to be kept, private businesses to tend and deals to be made in a rush to get ahead.

"I feel like this year has gone by faster than ever. We're living in accelerated times," said Antonio Hernandez, a 57-year-old maintenance worker. "You wake up one morning ... and next thing you know we're already in December!" The feeling of hastening time harkens back to another era. The years following the 1959 revolution marked a period of upheaval as Fidel Castro and his band of armed rebels ousted strongman Fulgencio Batista and put a quick end to his brand of freewheeling capitalism.

In short order, Castro nationalized private businesses. The new Communist government mobilized teachers across the nation to teach the poor and soon declared illiteracy had been eradicated. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion was followed by the U.S. economic embargo and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Cubans were guaranteed cradle-to-grave housing, food, health care and government jobs, regardless of performance. There were times of boom and bust, national dreams of outsized sugar harvests, military adventures in Africa and an embrace of all things Soviet, until the East-

ern bloc imploded. Then for decades, life seemed to slow to a crawl. Complacency set in. Productivity waned. Time became static. The results were sometimes maddening. Cubans spent years on waiting lists for cars and homes, or stood in lines for hours to purchase food and household goods — sometimes without even knowing what was on offer or if there would be any left when they got to the front. Rain was reason enough to delay going to work in this tropical country. Some found the pace liberating. There was no need to drive fast, because they weren't really expected to arrive on time. There was no pressure to answer

relations with China, Vietnam and Russia, Havana and Washington remained in a lockstep of hostility. But many Cubans say life has speeded up since Raul Castro took over the presidency in 2006, when Fidel was stricken with an intestinal disease that nearly killed him. Raul quickly legalized computers and cell phones and removed restrictions on Cubans entering tourist hotels, but he waited three years to announce more fundamental changes, including an embrace of limited forms of free market capitalism. Cuba has begun opening up Internet access, and increased private computer and cell phone ownership. Cubans now can run their

It's legal to work independently as a bathroom attendant or fruit peeler, but not to hang your shingle as a private lawyer. And Cuba remains the country with the lowest Internet penetration, and slowest service, in the Western Hemisphere. "Change? What change?" said Orlando Rivera, a 28-year-old unemployed Havana resident. "What I want is to get out of here. My mind's made up, and I'm desperate." While Fidel Castro largely governed by fiat and force of personality, his brother Raul is more considered. He seeks consensus, which takes time. Fiddling with a new iPhone, the diplomat Alzugaray,



Men play chess on the sidewalk in front of a wall covered in graffiti that reads in Spanish: "Long live Fidel and Raul," in Havana, Cuba, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013. In Cuba, revolution is understood as a permanent state. Past, present and future are bound together in a single historical moment: Fidel Castro's triumphant march into Havana in January 1959.

(AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

email, because few had access to Internet. And nobody would suggest a Sunday afternoon playing dominos with friends was a waste of time, because it was a habit 40 years in the making. Time stood still in politics, too. In other countries, a change in government often delineates an era. The Reagan administration; England under Thatcher; Obama's America. In Cuba, for nearly 50 years it was Fidel Castro and the Communist Party with no prospects for change. Likewise in foreign relations. While the U.S. government normalized

own businesses, buy and sell homes, go into business for themselves, hire workers and travel abroad without enduring the humiliation of asking their government for permission.

For the restless, change is coming too slowly. Yes, they can travel and buy property, but they want more: more money, more opportunity, more political freedom. The Communist Party is still the only legal political party on the island, and officials say that's not up for debate. The economy remains feeble. Dissidents still are routinely harassed and detained.

70, said he, too, would like to see faster-paced change, but he said Raul Castro's measured pace ultimately may yield longer-lasting results. "There's a conservative sector that he can't just shove aside," Alzugaray said.

In many parts of Havana, the cityscape is changing rapidly. Along a once darkened street, pedestrians now walk through the neon glow of signs advertising new bars, restaurants and rooms for rent. On the waterfront, a crumbling pier has been razed and a gleaming microbrewery is set to open its doors. □

EU official is dissatisfied with Google

MARK SCOTT
© 2013 New York Times

LONDON — Google's latest proposal to settle an antitrust investigation in Europe does not go far enough, the European Union's competition commissioner said Friday, dealing a blow to the company as it tries to resolve the case.

The inquiry, which began in November 2010, centers on whether Google has abused its dominant position as the most widely used search engine in Europe, and in particular on whether Google has favored its own products and services over those of rivals. In October, the union agreed to a tentative deal that would have required Google to make concessions to provide rivals with greater visibility on Web search queries.

Speaking to Spanish radio, Joaquín Almunia, the union's competition commissioner, said Google's "latest proposals are not acceptable." He added that time was running out for the company to offer further concessions that would allay the authorities' concerns about potential anticompetitive practices. He did not say which of Google's concessions had not gone far enough.

Although Almunia's comments stopped short of a formal rejection of Google's proposal, any deal will now most likely be delayed until after the spring. "The ball is still in Google's court," Almunia said. "Within a short time frame, the ball will be here, and then it will be the moment to make decisions."

In response, Google said its latest concessions, which are its second set after its original set was rejected in May, already addressed the concerns of the European Commission, the EU's executive arm.

"We've made significant changes to address the EC's concerns, greatly increasing the visibility of rival services and addressing other specific issues," Al Verney, a Google spokesman in Brussels, said in a statement. □

LOCAL Aruba TODAY

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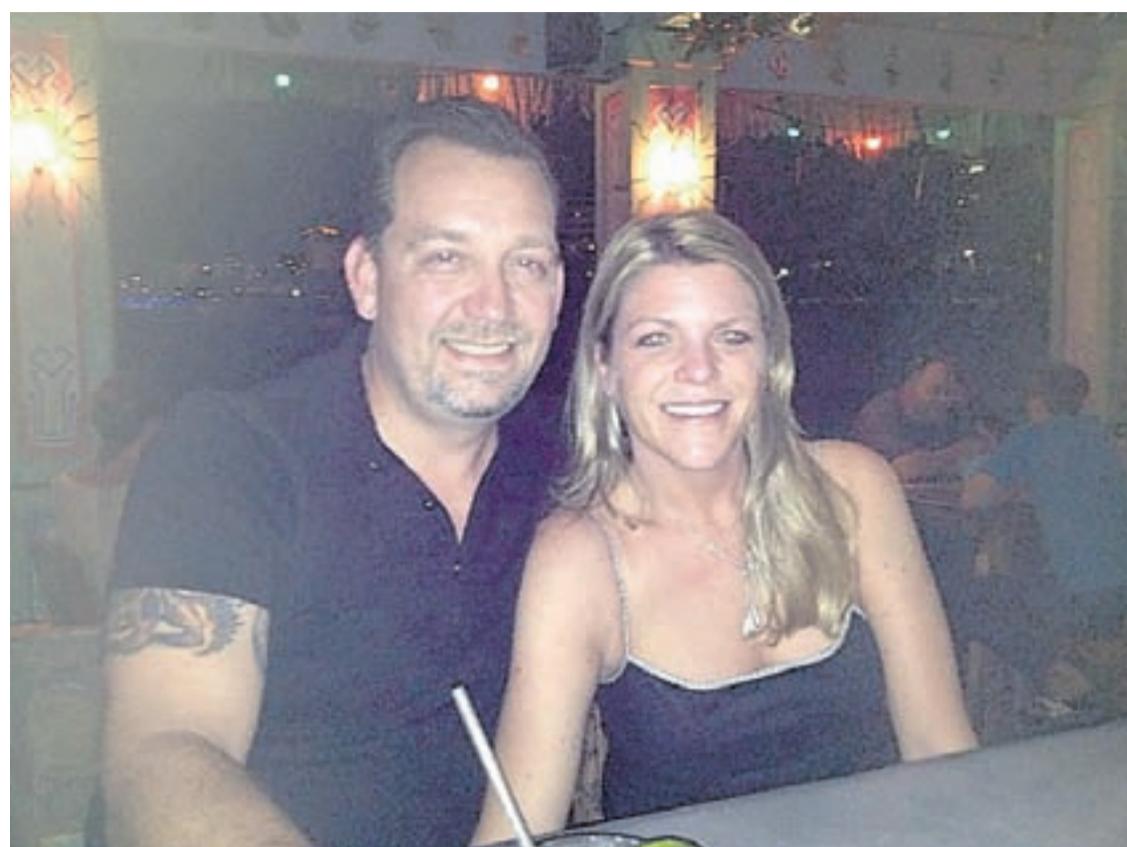


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A Warm Welcome Back to Bugaloe Special Guests Laura & Terry!

Palm Beach- Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill guests of the week are Laura Strzelecki and Terry Castrillon from New Jersey. They've been coming to Aruba twice a year for the last 2 years and just can't get enough of the stunning white beaches, beautiful weather and of course Bugaloe and their great bartenders. They love Bugaloe for the great atmosphere, the music and awesome staff. When enjoying a bite to eat their favorite menu item either

is the mozzarella or steak sandwich. Which are great combo's with a home-made mojito or a Ketel One Vodka-Club Soda. In the short but many times Laura and Terry visited Aruba and Bugaloe their funniest memory is the artist that comes in and draws the same picture every single time they are here, and only changes the hair color, facial hair and clothing. But still, they buy the picture every time! They also like the yellow belly birds who sip the sweet alcohol



from the bottles and shows up on their hotel balcony for a second round. The last time Laura and Terry were on Aruba, the day they were supposed to leave there was a bad

rain storm. So bad, that the shuttle bus that was supposed to bring them to the airport never showed up! Luckily they could call good Bugaloe friend JC. He arranged a friend who

could give them a ride to the airport. They love him for that! The Bugaloe crew would like to thank Laura and Terry for being loyal Bugaloe guests and hope to see them more often. □



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SPORTS

Aruba TODAY

NFL Preview

Panthers look to silence Brees, Saints in rematch

BARRY WILNER

AP Pro Football Writer

The New Orleans Saints know all about big NFL games in December — and beyond. The Carolina Panthers once did, but that was nearly a decade ago, when they had few of their current players.

On Sunday, they meet in Charlotte in the kind of matchup the NFL covets around Christmas. They both have 10-4 records, tied for the NFC South lead. "Your No. 1 goal every year is to win your division, first and foremost, and we have the opportunity to do that this weekend," Saints quarterback Drew Brees said. "It's going to take our best performance in order to get it done."

Not only will the game likely determine the division champion but also a first-round bye in the NFC. And playing at home is of particular interest to these two teams during the postseason.

The Saints are 7-0 at the Superdome; the Panthers



Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton (1) is upended as he carries against New Orleans Saints free safety Malcolm Jenkins (27) in the first half of an NFL football game in New Orleans, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2013.

Associated Press

are 6-1 at home, with their only loss coming in a close defeat to the Seattle Seahawks in the season opener. Seattle merely has the league's best record. The Panthers haven't been to the playoffs since 2008, and quarterback Cam Newton is among several players eager for a trip to the postseason.

"We're looking at it as, 'Why not us?'" Newton said. "... If we do what we have to do. If we win this game, we have our confirmation of being in the playoffs."

There is the added motivation of beating the Saints, who handed Carolina its only loss in the past 10 games.

"We really got embarrassed a couple of weeks ago," Newton said. "This is our opportunity to prove to ourselves that we are who we think we are."

All three other NFC divisions could also be decided.

Continued on page 21



In this Aug. 27, 2013, file photo, Baltimore Orioles relief pitcher Troy Patton tosses the ball to first to get Boston Red Sox's Mike Napoli out on a grounder in a baseball game in Boston.

Associated Press

Troy Patton suspended 25 games for positive test

NEW YORK (AP) — Baltimore Orioles relief pitcher Troy Patton has been suspended for the first 25 games of next season after a positive test for a banned amphetamine. Patton told The Baltimore Sun that he took an Adderall pill four days before the season finished, trying to improve his short-term focus. "I took one because I was stupid," Patton told The Sun. "It was the end of the season. It was just a stupid mistake." "I don't have trouble focus-

ing all the time, it just enhances focus in certain situations, and I was just tired, basically. I don't want to list that as an excuse. I know I took a banned substance. It was just a poor lapse in judgment," he said.

Under the drug agreement between MLB and its players' union, 25 games is the penalty for a second positive amphetamine test. A first positive results only in follow-up testing.

Patton said he also tested positive for Adderall during

spring training in 2010. Patton became the 15th player suspended this year under the big league drug program following 14 penalized as a result of MLB's Biogenesis investigation.

The 28-year-old left-hander, a veteran of five major league seasons, was 2-0 with a 3.70 ERA this year in 56 relief appearances.

Orioles executive vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette said the team was "disappointed to learn of Troy Patton's suspension." □

Svindal wins super-G as rivals struggle or crash

ANDREW DAMPF
AP Sports Writer

VAL GARDENA, Italy (AP)

— Aksel Lund Svindal increased his overall World Cup lead by winning the Val Gardena super-G for the third time on Friday, while many of his rivals skied off course or crashed in difficult conditions.

Svindal clocked 1 minute, 35.82 seconds in a flawless run on the Saslong course to match his wins here in 2009 and last year. It was the Norwegian's 24th career win and his third this season, having also won back-to-back speed races in Beaver Creek, Colorado, this month.

Jan Hudec of Canada finished second, 0.58 seconds behind, and Adrian Theaux of France was third, 0.91 back.

With wins worth 100 points each, Svindal moved 125 points ahead of Austrian rival Marcel Hirscher, who

does not usually race super-G, in the overall standings. Ted Ligety of the United States remained third, 191 points back, after skiing off course on the top section. Ligety went wide and attempted to make the next gate but then pulled up when he realized it was too risky.

Svindal also moved atop the super-G standings, 91 points ahead of Patrick Kueng of Switzerland, who went off course midway down his run.

Bode Miller finished eighth for his best speed result of the season, despite trouble landing the final jump, which forced the American to collide with the last gate, catching his pole and losing precious time.

With fog on the top and flat light the rest of the way down, seven of the top 30 starters did not finish and two others were disqualified for missing the final



Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal reacts at finish line after taking first place during an alpine ski, men's ski World Cup super-G race, in Val Gardena, Italy, Friday, Dec. 20, 2013.

Associated Press

gate — Peter Fill of Italy and Hannes Reichelt of Austria. Fill had a podium run going until he hit the last gate. Matteo Marsaglia, an Ital-

ian who finished second last year, had an ugly fall midway down after failing to land a jump and went barreling through a gate

head first then got twisted around as he slid down the mountain. But he got up and appeared to avoid serious injury. □

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Flyers score 5 in 3rd, rally past Jackets 5-4

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Claude Giroux scored the tying and winning goals in the final minutes of the third period, rallying the Philadelphia Flyers past the Columbus Blue Jackets 5-4 on Thursday night.

NHL Capsules Giroux scored two of the Flyers' five third-period goals as Philadelphia stormed back from a 3-0 hole.

Giroux's 100th NHL goal was perhaps his most amazing, a backhanded and blind shot that beat Curtis McElhinney up high with 1:39 left. The Flyers captain had tied it with 4:39 left.

Jakub Voracek, Braydon Coburn, Erik Gustafsson also scored goals for the Flyers. Steve Mason got the win in his first game against his former team.

Cam Atkinson, Jack Skille, Nick Foligno and Blake Comeau had goals for Columbus.

SABRES 4, BRUINS 2

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Drew Stafford scored the winning goal in the third period, and Ryan Miller made 34 saves in Buffalo's victory over Boston.

Marcus Foligno and Brian Flynn both had a goal and an assist, and Tyler Myers also scored for Buffalo, which has won consecutive games for the first time since Nov. 15.

Stafford netted his first goal in 18 games.



Ottawa Senators center Jean-Gabriel Pageau, bottom, crashes into Florida Panthers goalie Scott Clemmensen during first-period NHL hockey game action on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013, in Ottawa, Ontario.

Associated Press

Brad Marchand scored both Bruins goals, and Chad Johnson allowed four goals on 23 shots.

PENGUINS 5, WILD 2

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Chris Kunitz scored his 19th goal, Sidney Crosby had two assists, and Pittsburgh jumped out to a four-goal lead before beating Minnesota en route to its season-high sixth straight victory.

Rookie defenseman Olli Maatta sealed the win when he scored on a third-period penalty shot. Pascal Dupuis and Brandon Sutter each scored for the second consecutive game, and defenseman Matt Niskanen also tallied for Pittsburgh, which has won 11 of 12 overall and nine straight at home.

Crosby had two assists to

extend his season-best point streak to nine games. He leads the NHL with 51 points.

Jason Pominville netted his team-high 16th goal, and Dany Heatley scored 3:13 into the third period for the Wild.

MAPLE LEAFS 2, COYOTES 1, SO

TORONTO (AP) — James van Riemsdyk and Joffrey Lupul scored in the shootout to lift Toronto over Phoenix.

Troy Bodie scored in regulation, and James Reimer made 34 saves. It was the Maple Leafs' second victory in seven games.

Martin Hanzal scored for the Coyotes, who got 26 saves from Mike Smith.

LIGHTNING 4, PREDATORS 2

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Anders Lindback made 28 saves and won in his first game against his former team, Alex Killorn had a goal and an assist, and Tampa Bay beat Nashville.

The Lightning also got goals from Martin St. Louis, Teddy Purcell and Richard Panik. Lindback stopped six shots, including a pair of quality chances by David Legwand, during a two-minute stretch late in the first period. Tampa Bay acquired Lindback in a trade with Nashville on June 15, 2012. Craig Smith had two goals for the Predators. Carter Hutton allowed four Lightning goals on just 14 shots. Hutton, who turned 28 on Thursday, was pulled after Panik's goal and replaced by Marek Mazanec.

PANTHERS 4, SENATORS 2

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Tom Gilbert and Tomas Kopecky scored in the final three minutes, and Florida topped Ottawa for its fifth straight win.

Gilbert beat Craig Anderson with a one-timer off a pass from Tomas Fleischmann with 2:32 left and only two seconds remaining in a high-sticking penalty to Senators forward Jean-Gabriel Pageau.

Kopecky then broke out on a 2-on-1 rush and beat Anderson with 1:41 remaining. Jimmy Hayes, in the first period, and Aleksander

Barkov, in the second, also scored for the Panthers (14-17-5), who got 32 saves from Scott Clemmensen.

Chris Neil and Jason Spezza scored for the Senators (14-17-6), who have lost two straight and three of four.

RED WINGS 3, FLAMES 2, OT

DETROIT (AP) — Daniel Alfredsson scored two goals, including a power-play score at 1:03 of overtime, and Detroit earned a win over Calgary.

Detroit snapped a six-game losing streak (0-4-2) and a five-game skid at home.

Alfredsson added an assist, and Joakim Andersson also scored for Detroit. Pavel Datsyuk had three assists, Niklas Kronwall added two assists, and Jonas Gustavsson made 20 saves.

Mikael Backlund and Mark Giordano scored for Calgary. Mike Cammalleri had two assists, and Karri Ramo stopped 35 shots.

Alfredsson's winner came on a one-timed slap shot from the inside edge of the left circle for his ninth goal. He also earned his 700th NHL assist.

STARS 4, CANUCKS 1

DALLAS (AP) — Jamie Benn and Colton Sceviour scored goals 15 seconds apart in the first period, leading Dallas over Vancouver.

Erik Cole had a goal and two assists, and Tyler Seguin and Rich Peverley added two assists apiece for the Stars.

Kari Lehtonen made 26 saves and allowed only one goal for his 100th win with the Stars.

The Canucks (20-11-6) lost on the road for the second time in three nights, following a seven-game winning streak.

BLUES 5, CANADIENS 1

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Alexander Steen scored twice, and Jaroslav Halak made 25 saves against his former team to lead St. Louis over Montreal.

St. Louis broke a two-game losing streak and improved to 14-3-2 at home.

Montreal has lost four of six. Steen. □

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Curses? Bills playoff drought reaches 14 seasons

JOHN WAWROW

AP Sports Writer

ORCHARD PARK, New York

(AP) — It has been so long since the Buffalo Bills made the playoffs, Thurman Thomas is starting to buy into the theory the NFL franchise just might be cursed. "Yeah, it could be that. I've mentioned it to a couple of people at 1 Bills Drive about it," the Hall of Fame running back said, referring to the team's headquarters. "I tell you what, ever since we were let go on 'Black Thursday,' they haven't been to the playoffs."

Thomas meant a day regarded by Bills fans as among the worst in team history. On Thursday, Feb. 10, 2000, the Bills parted with the last core members of their AFC Championship teams by releasing Thomas, Hall of Fame defensive end Bruce Smith and receiver Andre Reed.

The Bills haven't been to the postseason since. The purge came a little over a month after "The Music City Miracle," an AFC wild-card playoff game which Buffalo lost at Tennessee on a last-second kickoff return for a touchdown.

The loss stung Thomas, and the abrupt nature of his departure made it worse. He found out by reading the news crawl across the ticker at the bottom of the TV screen.

"I don't think that we were



Jacksonville Jaguars defensive end Andre Branch (90) grabs Buffalo Bills quarterback EJ Manuel (3) by the jersey to stop him during the first half of an NFL football game in Jacksonville, Fla., Sunday, Dec. 15, 2013.

let go or released properly," Thomas said. "Hey, I guess what goes around, comes around."

A curse? Why not.

There has been enough amiss in Buffalo to include numerous explanations how a once-proud team owns the NFL's longest active playoff drought. The streak reached 14 years after the Bills were eliminated from contention with a 5-9 record last weekend.

"I could have never thought it was possible: 14 years in a

row," Thomas said. "There were a lot of bad draft picks, a lot of bad decisions that went along with that." Nothing has worked.

Since 2000, Buffalo is on its sixth head coach (Doug Marrone), sixth general manager (Doug Whaley), and had 11 quarterbacks start at least one game.

And then there's Buffalo's spotty drafting history. Of the 12 players the Bills selected in the first round from 2000-09, only three have stayed with the team

beyond a fifth season. That doesn't include center Eric Wood (selected 28th in 2009), who signed a contract extension in August.

The lack of continuity, coupled with numerous dubious decisions, has the Bills pushing modern-day NFL limits for futility.

Since 1933, Buffalo's 14-season drought is tied for the 11th longest in league history and well short of the NFL-record of 25 seasons shared by the Chicago/St. Louis Cardinals (1949-1973)

Associated Press

and Washington Redskins (1946-70), according to STATS. But among teams whose droughts began after 1970, the Bills are tied for second with Kansas City (1972-85), Tampa Bay (1983-96) and Cincinnati (1991-2004), and one short of the St. Louis/Arizona Cardinals (1983-97).

"I'm not asking for patience because I am impatient right now," Marrone said. "It's been 14 years. That's too damn long. And we're going to change that."

Super Bowl-winning quarterback turned broadcaster Trent Dilfer is familiar with what the Bills are going through.

Dilfer was the starter on a Tampa Bay team that ended the Buccaneers' 14-season playoff drought in 1997. In Seattle, he saw coach Mike Holmgren transform a team that had made one playoff appearance from 1989-2002 into a contender.

"I think every scenario's different," Dilfer said. "I don't know if there's a formula, but I think there's a commonality."

It begins with a front-office having the conviction to stick to a vision. The second step is communicating that plan. The third is having the players accept change.

"It's better to have your entire team doing it the wrong way, than half your team doing it the right way," □

NFL PREV IEW

Continued from page 18

Start with the NFC East, where things are simpler. If the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Chicago Bears, and the Dallas Cowboys lose to the Washington Redskins, Philadelphia goes from last place to first in one year and clinches. Philly will know before its prime-time kickoff what Dallas did in the afternoon, and a Cowboys win renders this one meaningless for the Eagles, who must win at Dallas next Sunday to take the division.

Both Philadelphia and Dallas come off losses, with the Cowboys' one-pointer

against Green Bay the more painful.

Chicago has a one-game lead on the Detroit Lions and a half-game edge on the Green Bay Packers in the NFC North. Should the Bears and their dynamic offense outscore the Eagles while the Lions and Packers fall, Chicago owns the division title.

The Bears have won the past two meetings, four of the past five and the past two in Philadelphia.

Already into the playoffs, the Seahawks clinch the NFC West and home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs with a win over Arizona or a San Francisco loss to Atlanta

on Monday in the last game at Candlestick Park. Seattle has won 14 straight at home and quarterback Russell Wilson never has lost a game at CenturyLink Field. His 23 victories are the most for a quarterback in his first two seasons.

The New England Patriots will take their fifth straight AFC East title and earn a 15th playoff berth in 20 years with a victory at Baltimore. It would be coach Bill Belichick's 11th division title, tied with Don Shula for the most since the 1970 AFL-NFL merger. And they surely remember what the Ravens did to them twice last season, including in the AFC championship

matchup in Foxborough. "You get a little bit of a rivalry, and then you're always paying attention to what that team's doing," Patriots passer Tom Brady said.

Baltimore earns a playoff spot by winning its last two games. It also has a shot at grabbing the AFC North away from the Cincinnati Bengals, who have led the division pretty much all season. The Ravens have made the postseason in all five previous years with John Harbaugh as coach and Joe Flacco as quarterback.

After seeing how the Minnesota Vikings, minus Adrian Peterson, upset

the Eagles last week, the Bengals won't be complacent, especially with Peterson back in the lineup. Cincinnati has won all six home games.

Elsewhere, the Denver Broncos visit Houston, where the Texans have lost 12 straight games. Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning has 47 touchdown passes, three shy of Brady's season record set six years ago. Also on Sunday, it's New York Giants at Detroit, Pittsburgh at Green Bay, Indianapolis at Kansas City, Miami at Buffalo, Oakland at San Diego, Tampa Bay at St. Louis, Tennessee at Jacksonville, Cleveland at New York Jets. □

Spurs edge Warriors despite no star trio

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — San Antonio's Tiago Splitter tipped in a rebound with 2.1 seconds left to give the Spurs to a 104-102 victory over Golden State on Tuesday, taking a valuable win that came in the absence of their experienced star trio. NBA Roundup Golden State came out on the losing end of a thrilling finish, with Stephen Curry hitting a 3-pointer to tie the game before San Antonio snatched the win on the next possession, as Splitter jumped around the rim to get the decisive touch after two teammates had missed chances to sink the winning basket.

San Antonio was missing Tony Parker for the second straight game with a bruised shin, while Tim Duncan and Manu Ginobili were rested, yet the Spurs still managed to pull out a big road win and hand the

Warriors another devastating defeat in a rematch of last season's Western Conference semifinals.

Marco Belinelli scored 28 points for San Antonio, against his old team, while Kawhi Leonard and Patty Mills both topped 20 points in a season high for all three.

David Lee had 32 points and 13 rebounds for the Warriors, while Curry scored 30 points and tied his career high with 15 assists.

In the day's other game, Oklahoma City extended its winning streak to eight games with a 107-95 win over Chicago.

Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant scored 32 points in the win over Chicago. Russell Westbrook had 20 points for the Thunder, who improved to 13-0 at home this season; the only NBA team with a perfect home record. □

San Antonio Spurs' Tiago Splitter, right, tips in the game winning score over Golden State Warriors' Andrew Bogut (12) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013, in Oakland, Calif.

Associated Press



Spain year-end footy No. 1 for 6th straight year

ZURICH (AP) — Spain tops the year-end FIFA rankings for the sixth straight year, since starting its run of major tournament wins at the 2008 European Champion-

ship. The 2010 World Cup winner leads Germany, Argentina and Colombia at the head of an unchanged top 10. Just 30 national team matches were

played in the past month to affect the calculations. The United States remains the best-placed CONCACAF team at No. 14. Ivory Coast leads Africa at No.

17. Bosnia-Herzegovina rises two places to No. 19, pushing No. 21 Mexico down one. Iran still leads Asian confederation teams and rises 12 to No. 33. □

FIFA says No. 18 Ukraine made the biggest rankings rise in 2013, up 29 places. Ukraine failed to qualify for the World Cup, losing a playoff to No. 20 France. □

Europe leads U.S. at Duel in the Pool by 14 points

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — The Americans are facing defeat in the Duel in the Pool for the first time.

After winning eight out of 14 races on Friday, the European All Stars lead 68-54 going into the second and final day of the meet in Glasgow.

The U.S. has won all five previous Duels in the Pool, beating Australia in the first three editions and the Europeans in 2009 and 2011.

Even without its top male swimmer, Ryan Lochte, the Americans won five of the seven men's races,

with Olympic gold medalist Conor Dwyer coming out on top in the 400 individual medley by 0.64 seconds.

But the European women got the better of their American rivals, triumphing in six races and losing just one at the short-course (25-meter pool) meet.

"We'll come out fighting tomorrow," U.S. head coach Carol Capitani told broadcaster Sky Sports. "Let's go out and show some gumption."

The signs were good early on for the Europeans, who got off to an impressive

start in the women's 400 individual medley. Spain's Mireia Belmonte emerged victorious, with Aimee Willmott of Britain in second and Caitlin Leverenz out in third for the Americans.

Five points are awarded for a win, three for second place, and one for third. The early 8-1 European advantage was quickly wiped out in the men's 400 IM.

Already a proven short course talent, it was no real surprise to see Dwyer come out on top, ahead of compatriot Chase Kalisz and Hungary's David Verrasztó.

But the 100 freestyle events were won by Michelle Coleman of Sweden and Yannick Agnel of France, before Daryna Zevina of Ukraine won the 200 backstroke.

The Americans rattled off successive victories — Eugene Godsoe in the men's 200 backstroke and Micah Lawrence in the 200 breaststroke.

Other American successes saw Tom Shields triumph in the 100 butterfly in 49.80 seconds, and Michael Klueh win the 400 freestyle in 3 minutes, 39.94 seconds.

"I'm more of a distance swimmer than some of these other guys so I knew I would have a little more at the end," Klueh said.

The biggest cheers of the night came when Scottish swimmer Michael Jamieson touched in first in the men's 200 breaststroke as he prepares for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow next year.

"I was out a bit too slow and had a bit too much left at the end to be honest," he said. "I'm delighted about the result but I had it in my legs to go a bit quicker." □

One-stop mobile app offers Broadway ticket ease

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There are plenty of ways to get tickets to Broadway shows: You can wait in line at Times Square's TKTS booth or hunt online at Ticketmaster. You might try a ticket broker or a scalper. Then there's simply going to the theater's box office.

Now two guys who met more than a decade ago at summer camp think they've come up with a way to make the whole process easier and faster. They've created TodayTix, a one-stop mobile app for last-minute ticket buyers. The free app lets users see all the various shows being offered up to one week in advance, select a seat, pay for it with the best price currently available and then send you proof of your ticket — all in less than a minute.

"We've really created the app with the idea that it should take 30 seconds or less from choosing the show to confirmation of the ticket. It's just got to be that easy," says Merritt Baer, a former investment banker who became a ticket pricing expert in Europe.

He and Brian Fenty, a private equity investor, are theater lovers who went into the business world, hoping to return to their first love. They met 15 years ago at the French Woods Festival of the Performing

Arts in upstate New York. "We are just theater fans who want to sell more theater tickets," Fenty says. "At the end of the day, 20 percent of Broadway still goes unsold every single night on average."

TodayTix searches for the best prices — whether it's a steep discount or full price for a hit show — and passes them along, plus a \$5 convenience fee, one of the lowest out there. It promises a future of no long lines, shady websites and uncertainty.

Ticket buyers can either pick up their tickets at the box offices that have partnered with TodayTix — including The Public and The Roundabout Theatre — or be greeted outside the theater by a TodayTix representative who is wearing in a red T-shirt or sweatshirt and already has sent them a photo of him or herself holding the tickets. (The so-called concierge service costs another \$5).

Other features include the ability to send a photo of ticket buyers' credit cards if they can't be bothered to type in the numbers, reviews of the various shows, social media buttons, push notifications if better seats open up and a calendar feature that lets users pick available shows over multiple days.

"People just want to buy theater tickets in an easy, convenient way," Baer

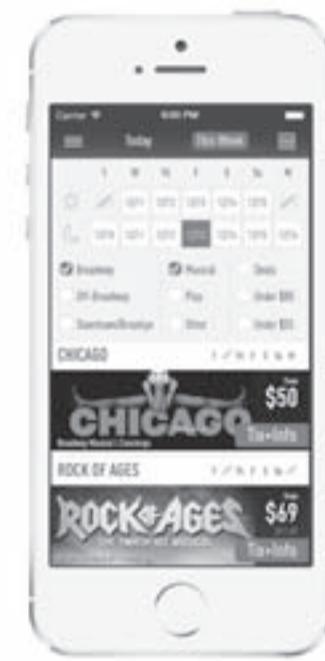
says. "The ticketing industry hasn't evolved particularly in the last 50 years."

The app comes at a time when half of Broadway tickets are purchased within a week of the performance, making it harder for theaters to plan ahead. A mobile ticketing application is the logical outgrowth of an increasing digital trend in which some 47 percent of people buy their tickets online.

This week, the app had a pair of tickets in the mezzanine for "First Date" for \$118, a savings of \$56, and a pair in the side orchestra for "Newsies" at \$73 each, or \$158 off the regular price. Tickets were also available for off-Broadway offerings like "Blue Man Group," "The Radio City Christmas Spectacular" and "Avenue Q."

Baer and Fenty built TodayTix from an oversubscribed initial round of financing that raised \$500,000. They released a test app in September and already have seen it used 50,000 times so far, with repeat customers representing a quarter of users. So far, TodayTix is available only on the iPhone, but there are plans to have it on other mobile platforms soon.

The pair turned for help to multiple Tony Award-winning theater producer and academic Elizabeth Williams, who serves as a TodayTix partner and theatri-



This image released by The O+M Company shows the TodayTix app. TodayTix, a new ticket-purchasing mobile app created by a team of theater producers and ticketing veterans, hopes to bring Broadway into the 21st Century. Its creators hope to reduce the time from customers picking a show to getting confirmation of their tickets to just 30 seconds.

Associated Press

cal adviser. Williams, who is currently producing "Waiting for Godot" and "No Man's Land," was excited by the app's promise. "Any new ideas that come into the space that will provide shows a way to market their tickets is of interest to me," she says. "We'll be able to reach audiences

potentially who we haven't been able to reach before. I'm very hopeful that this can make a big difference to us." Williams, a longtime BlackBerry user, will get to use the new app on her own after Christmas. That's when Santa — in reality, her son — gets her an iPhone. □



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BlackBerry posts massive 3Q loss of \$4.4 billion

ROB GILLIES
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — BlackBerry reported a massive \$4.4 billion loss in the third quarter and a 56 percent drop in revenue in its first quarterly report under new chairman and chief executive John Chen.

Despite the results, Chen said on a conference call with analysts that BlackBerry "has a really good shot" of turning a profit in 2016 and management will try its best to achieve the goal. Chen later laughed when an analyst wished him the "best of luck."

The former Sybase CEO is credited with turning around Sybase, a data company that was sold to SAP in 2010. Chen said reviving BlackBerry will be his most "complicated" challenge but noted, however, that the company has \$3.2 billion in cash, which will "definitely allow us to engineer our turnaround."

BlackBerry also announced Friday that it's entering into a five-year partnership with Foxconn, the Taiwanese company that assembles products in vast factories in China. Foxconn, known for its manufacturing contract work on Apple's iPhones and iPads, will jointly design and manufacture most BlackBerry devices and manage inventory of the devices in an agreement that will offload much of BlackBerry's manufacturing costs.

"I'm hoping we never have to have a conversation going forward about inventory write downs," Chen said. He said Foxconn's BlackBerry phones will be released in March or April and will be built in Indonesia and Mexico.

BlackBerry reported revenue of \$1.2 billion, down from \$2.7 billion in the same quarter last year.

Chen has said the company "is very much alive" but is putting more emphasis on BlackBerry's software business than its hardware business.

"I'll be happy to have a breakeven or a low margin device business and then have that help us to mon-



This photo shows a BlackBerry Q10 smartphone in Toronto. BlackBerry on Friday, Dec. 20, 2013 reported a massive \$4.4 billion loss in the third quarter and 56 percent drop in revenue. The results are the BlackBerry's first under new chairman and interim chief executive John Chen.

(AP Photo/Graeme Roy)

etize software," said Chen, who he is dropping the interim label from his

title, said the market has spoken. BlackBerry said it sold just 1.9 million smart-

phones in the quarter compared to 3.7 million in the previous quarter.

Most of those were old BlackBerry 7 devices. This year's launch of BlackBerry 10, its revamped operating system, and fancier devices — the touchscreen Z10 and Q10 for keyboard loyalists — was supposed to rejuvenate the brand and lure customers. But the much-delayed phones failed to turn the company around and have led to a billion dollar loss last quarter and a \$1.6 billion loss in the third quarter.

"It was ugly," said Colin Gillis, an analyst at BGC Partners.

Gillis said the Foxconn agreement may help keep BlackBerry alive by offer-

ing lower cost phones into the emerging markets like Indonesia with minimal inventory risk to the company. It also allows BlackBerry to focus on designing and producing a small batch of devices for high end business users where security is paramount, and where the company still has pockets of loyalty, he said.

BlackBerry's net loss amounted to \$8.37 per share in the latest quarter. Its adjusted loss from continuing operations, which excludes restructuring and other items, was \$354 million, or 67 cents per share. Analysts polled by FactSet, on average, expect an adjusted loss of 43 cents per share on revenue of \$1.66 billion. □

Stocks rise on strong US economic growth

KEN SWEET
AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — An unexpectedly strong report on U.S. economic growth pushed stocks higher Friday, capping off Wall Street's best week in three months.

The report, which showed the U.S. economy grew at a healthy 4.1 percent annual pace between July and September, is the latest positive piece of economic data investors have gotten in recent weeks.

"It's a fantastic signal that we're getting robust growth and it looks like it might be accelerating," said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer for BMO Private Bank in Chicago, which oversees \$66 billion.

On Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial average rose 42.06 points, or 0.3 percent, to 16,221.14. The index ended the week up 3 percent, its biggest gain since the week of Sept. 13.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 8.71 points, or 0.5 percent, to 1,818.31 and the Nasdaq composite added 46.61 points, or 1.2 percent, to 4,104.74. Both indexes ended the week up roughly 2.5 percent.

In a sign that investors have a strong appetite for risk, the Russell 2000 index, an

index made up mostly of smaller, high-growth companies, closed up nearly 2 percent Friday to 1,146.47. The bulk of this week's gains came Wednesday, after the Federal Reserve announced it was going to

bond-buying program to \$75 billion a month from \$85 billion a month.

Investors cheered the surprise decision, sending the Dow up nearly 300 points Wednesday.

"They had to get out of the



Trader Stephen McSherry, right, checks prices as he works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. An unexpectedly strong report on U.S. economic growth pushed stocks higher Friday, capping off Wall Street's best week in three months.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

pull back on its economic stimulus program. The Fed said it would reduce its

way," said Quincy Crosby, market strategist with Prudential Financial. "The

more the market obsessed about when the Fed was going to pull back, the more the market couldn't focus on anything else, like the improving economy."

Friday's gross domestic product estimate was the latest report to show unexpected strength in the U.S. economy.

The 4.1 percent annualized growth rate is the fastest since 2011. More importantly, most of the increase came from consumer spending, a key part of the U.S. economy.

In other markets, the yield on the benchmark U.S. 10-year Treasury note fell to 2.89 percent, from 2.93 percent the day before. Gold rose \$10.10, or 0.8 percent, to \$1,203.70 an ounce.

In company news:

— BlackBerry jumped 97 cents, or 16 percent, to \$7.22. The struggling smartphone maker posted a \$4.4 billion loss but also said it would outsource its hardware business to focus on software and services.

— Red Hat, an open-source software developer, jumped \$7.10, or 15 percent, to \$56.10, one of the biggest increases in the S&P 500 index.

Red Hat's adjusted earnings came in well ahead of Wall Street's estimates. □

Drugstore chain Walgreen's 1Q profit jumps 68%

TOM MURPHY

AP Business Writer

Walgreen's fiscal first-quarter earnings soared 68 percent as investments in other companies paid off for the nation's largest drugstore chain, but a slowdown in generic drug introductions helped squeeze profitability. The Deerfield, Illinois, company said Friday that it booked a total of \$376 million in income during the quarter that ended Nov. 30 from its stakes in European health and beauty retailer Alliance Boots and U.S. pharmaceutical wholesaler AmerisourceBergen Corp. Last year, Walgreen Co. acquired a 45 percent stake in Alliance Boots, which runs the largest drugstore chain in the United Kingdom, and it has an option to buy the rest of the company in 2015. Earlier this year, it also bought an ownership stake in AmerisourceBergen and entered a supply agreement with the company.

Analysts have said they like the potential for growth that these deals give Wal-



Customers leave a Walgreens pharmacy in Jackson, Miss. Walgreen Co. reported strong quarterly financial results, Friday, Dec. 20, 2013.

(AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis)

green, which runs 8,200 drugstores.

Overall, Walgreen earned \$695 million, or 72 cents per share, in a fiscal first-quarter performance that matched analyst expec-

tations. That was up from \$413 million, or 43 cents per share, a year ago, when the company absorbed Alliance Boots deal charges and took a \$24 million hit after Superstorm Sandy

forced it to temporarily close hundreds of stores. Revenue climbed 6 percent to \$18.33 billion, while analysts forecast \$18.35 billion, according to FactSet. □

Altria, Philip Morris Int'l partnering on products

MICHAEL FELBERBAUM

AP Tobacco Writer

RICHMOND, Virginia (AP)

— The makers of Marlboro cigarettes sold in the U.S. and those sold overseas are sharing their technology for electronic cigarettes and other new tobacco products.

Altria Group Inc. and Philip Morris International Inc. said Friday that they've entered into agreements related to marketing alternatives to traditional cigarettes. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Companies are venturing into smokeless tobacco and other nicotine products to diversify beyond the declining traditional cigarette business as tax increases, health concerns, smoking bans and stigma cut into demand.

Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat a liquid nicotine solution, creating vapor that is inhaled. Their pop-

ularity has grown swiftly, from thousands of users in 2006 to several million worldwide today.

Devotees say e-cigarettes address both the addictive

rettes. And they get to hold something shaped like a cigarette, while puffing and exhaling something that looks like smoke.

Under the agreement, Al-

tria will provide Altria with two of its next-generation products that heat tobacco instead of burning it.

The move is consistent with Altria's ongoing efforts to develop a robust portfolio of innovative products that meet adult tobacco consumers' preferences, CEO Marty Barrington said in a statement.

In August, Altria's NuMark subsidiary launched its first e-cigarette under the MarkTen brand with a test market in Indiana and planned to expand into Arizona this month.

MarkTen is a disposable e-cigarette but can be reused by buying a separate battery recharging kit and additional cartridges in both tobacco and menthol flavors. The company said the e-cigarette's "Four Draw" technology is designed to give users a "more consistent experience" that closely resembles the draw of a traditional cigarette. □

This product image provided by Altria Group Inc., shows the company's first electronic cigarette under the MarkTen brand. Altria Group Inc. and Philip Morris International Inc. said Friday, Dec. 20, 2013 that they've entered into agreements related to marketing alternatives to traditional cigarettes. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

(AP Photo/Altria Group Inc.)

and behavioral aspects of smoking. Smokers get their nicotine without the more than 4,000 chemicals found in regular ciga-

tria will provide Philip Morris with a license to sell its newly introduced electronic cigarette products internationally. In turn, Philip Morris

Deutsche Bank charged \$1.9B for mortgages

MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN

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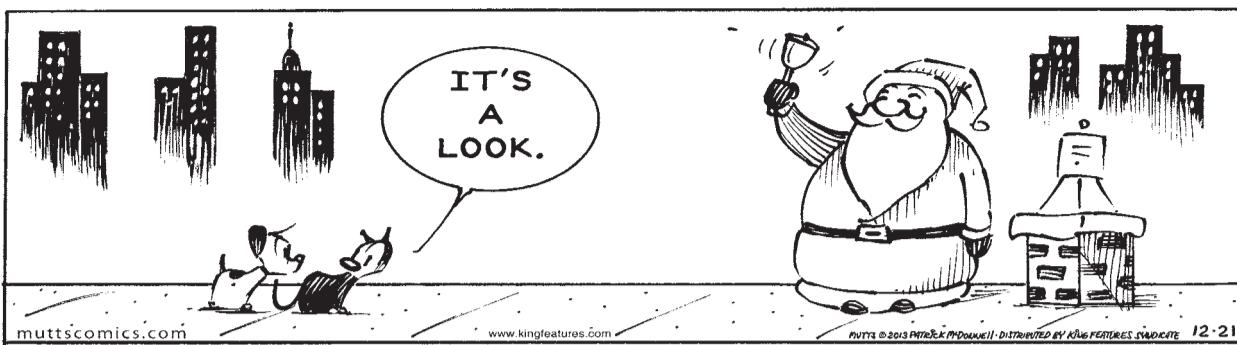
Deutsche Bank agreed Friday to pay about \$1.9 billion to settle claims that it had misled Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac over the quality of home loans bundled into mortgage-backed securities, becoming the latest big bank to reach a settlement with federal housing regulators. The bank, based in Germany, is the sixth entity to reach a settlement with the Federal Housing Finance Agency, which had sued 18 banks and financial institutions in September 2011. The agency says the institutions misled Fannie and Freddie before the financial crisis over the creditworthiness of borrowers and the quality of the loans that were packaged into securities. It is seeking to recoup some of \$196 billion that Fannie and Freddie had spent buying up the private-label mortgage-backed securities.

Deutsche Bank said in a news release that it had largely set aside money in its legal reserves to pay for the settlement, which it said "resolves its single largest mortgage-related litigation issue." About \$1.6 billion of the settlement will go to Freddie Mac and \$300 million will go to Fannie Mae.

The pace of settlements between the Federal Housing Finance Agency and the banks it sued has picked up in the past few months as Wall Street institutions look to put litigation arising from the financial crisis and the collapse of the U.S. housing market behind them.

In its lawsuits, the regulator said that some of the losses Fannie and Freddie incurred on mortgage-backed securities had stemmed from financial institutions' selling securities that were flawed because many of the home loans in those bonds were riskier than the banks had represented. □

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Conceptis Sudoku

1	7	8										3			
4		9										8			
	2		1									4			
3		4										7			
6	9			1											
8		7			3										
5			2	8	9										

Difficulty Level ★★★★

12-21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

2	6	8	4	7	1	9	5	3							
7	4	1	9	3	5	2	8	6							
9	5	3	8	2	6	1	4	7							
3	2	4	7	5	9	6	1	8							
1	9	5	2	6	8	7	3	4							
8	7	6	3	1	4	5	9	2							
5	1	7	6	8	3	4	2	9							
6	3	9	5	4	2	8	7	1							
4	8	2	1	9	7	3	6	5							

Yesterday's puzzle answer

ACROSS

- 1 Lily ___; floats for frogs
- 5 Skilled
- 10 Stain; mark
- 14 Spoil
- 15 Actress Winger
- 16 Popular detergent
- 17 ___ upon a time...
- 18 Actor's first performance
- 19 Make ___ meet; eke out a living
- 20 More vertical & harder to climb
- 22 Most orderly
- 24 ___ as a beet
- 25 Cattle groups
- 26 Colorado resort
- 29 Distress signal
- 30 Piers
- 34 Blend
- 35 Umpire's call
- 36 ___ sin; lesser offense
- 37 ___ we having fun yet?"
- 38 Ghost
- 40 Use a towel
- 41 Turn in, as an application
- 43 Mr. Linkletter
- 44 Lunch or dinner
- 45 Malign the reputation of
- 46 Firmament
- 47 Soiled
- 48 Giggler's sound
- 50 Attila, for one
- 51 Mrs. Roosevelt
- 54 ___ on the Roof"
- 58 Jack or joker
- 59 Meat shunner
- 61 Keep for later
- 62 Author Victor
- 63 ___ legislation; make laws
- 64 On an ___ keel; steady
- 65 Smell
- 66 Sits for a while
- 67 Sour
- 68 ___ and cons
- 69 Ambulance's blaring device
- 70 Helpful clues
- 71 Resound

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
14					15									16	
17					18									19	
20			21		22									23	
					24									25	
26	27	28			29					30		31	32	33	
34				35					36						
37		38			39				40						
41		42			43				44						
45			46			47									
51	52	53							54			55	56	57	
58				59		60			61						
62				63			64								
65				66			67								

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/21/13

Friday's Puzzle Solved

GLUE	CANAL	SCAM
RIND	AGILE	HOSE
ENDS	RACETRACKS	
WEE	OOZE	AMASIS
NOBLE	HIE	
PRIDES	COLDER	
READY	GRABS	MEL
EBBS	ALAMO	DAVY
YUL	SLATE	SANER
TEAMED	CIRCLE	
TAX	TUTTI	
ABHOR	WIDE	PIE
SAUNTER	ING	MARS
ABLE	LUNGE	ATOP
PALS	STEEL	PEN

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- 39 Attempt
- 42 Bullfighter
- 44 Attitude
- 46 Peaceful
- 47 Failure
- 49 ___ over; flutter above
- 52 Praise
- 53 As a result
- 54 Truism
- 55 Etna's output
- 56 At any time
- 57 Landlady's collection
- 58 ___ and cons
- 59 Helpful clues
- 60 Argon or xenon
- 61 Resound

Brazil: Debutante ball builds bridges in favelas

JENNY BARCHFIELD

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—The debutantes' frothy dresses of tulle and satin were spot-on, their make-up flawless and their hair sculpted into gravity-defying styles thanks to copious amounts of product.

But the young women who made their coming out Thursday night in a lavish Rio de Janeiro ceremony were not society girls, but

cell phone photos were snapped.

All of the debutantes turned 15 this year, but few had the means to celebrate the milestone with one of the lavish blowouts that are de rigueur among wealthier Brazilians.

"I didn't get to have a 15th birthday party because of my parents' financial circumstances, so this is a dream come true for me," gushed Lorena da Silva,



Debutantes cheer during a ball organized by the Pacifying Police Unit program, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013. All of the debutantes turned 15 this year, but few had the means to celebrate the milestone with one of the lavish blowouts that are almost de rigueur among wealthier Brazilians. The young women were not your typical society girls, but rather 15-year-olds from 36 of the city's "favela" slums, escorted by the police officers who patrol their communities.

(AP Photo/Silvia Izquierdo)

rather 15-year-olds from three dozen of the city's "favela" slums, escorted by police officers who patrol their communities.

The event marked the five-year anniversary of the pacifying police units, battalions that have reconquered slums ruled for decades by ruthless, drug-dealing gangs.

Uniformed officers gingerly held the debutantes' hands as the girls paraded in their evening finest, their elaborate up-dos topped by glittering rhinestone tiaras.

Unused to such attention, some girls smiled nervously, while others wore stony, almost grim looks as their families cheered raucously and professional photographers and TV cameras raced to get close-ups.

Tears streamed down the faces of several debutantes and many of their mothers, sisters and friends. Beauty pageant air kisses were blown; thousands of

abuzz with the adrenaline of a waltz with an officer serving in the Turano favela where she lives. "I was so nervous I couldn't believe it was still happening."

She and the other girls were chosen for essays they wrote describing how life had changed since the police set up shop in their communities.

The pacifying units are key to the Rio state government's strategy for lowering crime in this violent city before it plays host to next year's soccer World Cup and the 2016 Olympic games. But their record is mixed. Widely praised for having made many communities safer and more livable, they've also been criticized for alleged corruption and hard-handed tactics.

The recent case of a bricklayer who was tortured and killed by police in Rio's sprawling Rocinha slum has been widely seen as emblematic of abuses com-

mitted in some police units. But officials insist that units now headquartered in 36 Rio slums benefit local residents overall.

"There are many more positive aspects than negative ones," Jose Mariano Beltrame, head of Rio state security told journalists at Thursday's ball, where he danced with dozens of the debutantes. "Seven or eight years ago, an event like this one would have been unthinkable."

The ball, which relied on volunteers who coiffed and made up the girls and a formal wear shop that loaned the dresses, helped build goodwill between pacified favelas' residents and the officers who patrol them.

Liane Bispo da Silva, the mother of one of the debutantes, gave the police unit in her Adeus slum a mixed review, saying "it brought some quote unquote security." But she gave two thumbs up to Thursday's event. "It's so wonderful that my daughter gets to have this special day," said 35-year-old Silva, who sported a form-fitting gold gown embellished with sequins. "I never got to have a 15th birthday bash because my parents couldn't afford it either, so I almost feel like we're both celebrating together." □

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Debate brews over fate of wolves on U.S. island

JOHN FLESHER

AP Environmental Writer

TRAVERSE CITY, Michigan (AP) —

For visitors to Michigan's Isle Royale National Park, nothing beats the spine-tingling thrill of a wolf's howl piercing an otherwise silent night — or a glimpse of the wily beast slipping across a forest path. But such experiences are becoming increasingly rare, and before long may disappear forever.

The gray wolf population has dropped steadily in recent years at Isle Royale, a rocky, heavily wooded archipelago in Lake Superior that is among the least visited national parks because of its remote location — a six-hour ferryboat ride from the Michigan mainland.

Eight wolves remained when the last count was taken last winter, the lowest since the 1950s, although a couple of pups are believed to have been born this year. They've averaged 23 over the years. Scientists believe inbreeding, disease and a temporary shortage of the moose on which the wolves feed are responsible for the drop-off.

The wolves and moose are subjects of the world's longest-running study of a predator-prey relationship in a closed ecosystem, which raises a thorny question for scientists: Should they intervene to preserve the wolves or let nature take its course?

The issue is forcing park managers to make an uncomfortable choice between their traditional hands-off policy toward wildlife and ensuring that Isle Royale continues to have wolves, a point of pride and longtime drawing card for visitors.

The situation could set



In this February 2012 file photo provided by George Desort, two gray wolves walk in the Isle Royale National Park in Northern Michigan. The national park's wolf population has fallen to eight, lowest since the 1950s, and scientists are debating whether to do anything about it.

Associated Press

precedents for other parks, refuges and wilderness areas dealing with threats to iconic species as climate change alters the environment.

"This is going to help define what we think the word 'conservation' means during an era of tremendous global change," said John Vucetich of Michigan Technological University.

Vucetich and fellow biologist Rolf Peterson, who lead the wolf-moose study, are lobbying park officials to bring a few mainland wolves to the island, where they could invigorate the

gene pool.

Moose showed up on Isle Royale, which consists of one large island and hundreds of small ones, around the turn of the 20th century. It's unknown whether they swam or people brought them. Wolves arrived in the late 1940s, probably by crossing an ice bridge from the Canadian shore 15 miles (24 kilometers) away. With Lake Superior's winter ice cover shrinking, it's considered unlikely that other wolves will get that chance.

Wolves have become valuable to Isle Royale's health

by preventing a moose population explosion that would devastate the vegetation on which many animals depend, Vucetich and Peterson say. After slumping a few years ago, the moose have bounced back with the wolves' decline and totaled nearly 1,000 in the latest census. The study leaders contend the time has come to make preserving ecosystems a higher priority than the principle of non-intervention. Humans have already influenced almost every portion of the earth, Vucetich said. "From today forward,

there will be increasing instances where the preservation of an ecosystem's integrity will require human assistance."

But David Mech of the U.S. Geological Survey, who was among the first to observe the Isle Royale wolves in the late 1950s, says scientists can also learn from watching how long the wolves survive inbreeding without intervention.

This information would be "invaluable not only to understanding basic wolf genetics and behavior, but also to the entire field of conservation genetics," he said in a paper scheduled for publication.

Park Superintendent Phyllis Green is considering the options. "We need to make a decision before nature makes it for us," she said. Thus far, officials are skeptical that wolf rescue would advance the park's mission. Isle Royale is almost entirely a federal wilderness area, a designation favoring natural evolution over human influence. Caribou and lynx disappeared in the early 20th century after populating the island for thousands of years, Green said.

"If you start to tinker ... you're changing from being an observer to making it an experiment," she said. Despite averaging just 17,000 visitors a year — fewer than Yellowstone National Park gets in a day — Isle Royale has devoted followers. Established in 1940, it has no roads and sparse accommodations. Most people hike and camp in the rugged backwoods, where terrain varies from swamps to northern hardwoods and the highest point is 1,394 feet (425 meters) above sea level.

Like the scientists, Isle Royale visitors represent both sides of the wolf debate.

"Just knowing the wolves are on the landscape as you crawl into your tent makes it all the more special," said George Desort, a Chicago resident who has made two films about the park and favors intervention. □

Japan robot chats with astronaut on space station

EMILY WANG

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The first humanoid robot in space made small talk with a Japanese astronaut and said it had no problem with

zero gravity on the International Space Station.

Footage released by the robot's developers on Friday showed Kirobo performing its first mission on the station, talking in Japanese with astronaut Koichi Wakata to test its autonomous conversation functions.

Wakata says he's glad to meet Kirobo, and asks the robotic companion how it feels about being in a zero-gravity environment.

"I'm used to it now, no problem at all," Kirobo quips.

Kirobo is programmed to

process questions and select words from its vocabulary to construct an answer, instead of giving pre-programmed responses to specific questions.

The creator of the robot, Tomotaka Takahashi, said the autonomous functions meant nobody knew how well Kirobo would be able to answer Wakata's questions.

Though Kirobo had some awkward pauses and Wakata spoke more slowly than usual at times in their chat earlier this month, Takahashi said conversations smoothed out over time. □

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Tom Cruise, tabloids, settle lawsuit



Actor Tom Cruise speaks during the Ben Stiller Hand & Footprint Ceremony at TCL Chinese Theatre on Tuesday, December 3, 2013, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The publisher of two tabloid magazines says it never intended to imply that Tom Cruise had abandoned his daughter after his divorce. The statement from Bauer Publishing on Friday accompanied news that Cruise and the tabloids had reached a confidential settlement in a defamation case filed by the actor.

Bauer operates Life & Style and In Touch magazines. Cruise sued the magazines

over a pair of stories that suggested he had abandoned his daughter Suri after divorcing actress Katie Holmes.

His lawyer, Bert Fields, called the stories outrageous and said Cruise spoke to his daughter frequently while working on a pair of movie shoots that kept him overseas.

The magazines' statements said they regret if anyone interpreted their stories as meaning Cruise had cut all contact to his daughter. □

Popular young adult author Ned Vizzini dies at 32

HILLEL ITALIE
AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Ned Vizzini, a popular young adult author and television writer who wrote candidly and humorously about his struggles with depression, has killed himself.

His brother, Daniel Vizzini, says Ned Vizzini killed himself Thursday.

New York City's medical examiner's office confirmed that Friday.

The author, whose auto-

graphical novel "It's Kind of a Funny Story" was adapted into a feature film of the same name, was 32.

Published in 2006, the book tells of a student who ends up in a mental hospital.

In recent years, Vizzini was collaborating with filmmaker Chris Columbus on a series of young adult novels.

He also was working on the NBC series "Believe," a project co-created by J.J. Abrams. □

Usher says Bieber's mishaps are part of growing up

MARCELA ISAZA
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Usher says though Justin Bieber has had a wild year, people shouldn't count the pop singer out just yet.

"I mean more money more problems," the R&B singer said in an interview Wednesday at the premiere of "Justin Bieber Believe" in Los Angeles. "The beautiful part about it is that those that are invested in a long term story you understand that there are peaks and valleys in every person's life some. Unfortunately the reality is he has to live with a camera in front of him, but what he chooses to do on or off camera is analyzed or scrutinized in some off way."

Earlier this year Bieber was caught on camera clashing with a paparazzo. While touring the pop star fainted backstage at a London show and had to be taken to a hospital. These incidents came after photos of Bieber appearing to smoke marijuana hit the Web.

During the summer, he also had to apologize by phone to Bill Clinton, for cursing the former president and spraying his photo with cleaning fluid in a New York City restaurant kitchen. His longtime man-



Singer Justin Bieber, left, and singer Usher arrive at the premiere of the feature film "Justin Bieber's Believe" at Regal Cinemas L.A. Live on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2013, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

ager Scooter Braun agreed that Justin Bieber had a very crazy 2013.

"Pandora's box was opened. I mean he got a little bit into trouble," Braun began to explain as crowds screamed hysterically behind him upon Bieber's arrival.

"I don't know it's tough because the whole world is a critic," said Bieber's mother Pattie Mallette. "I think sometimes people dehumanize celebrities and I think what's so great about this movie is that you get to see his humanity."

"I think the media has been terrible on him," Bieber's grandmother Diane Dale fired back. "There are so many lies going around. A little bit is true but most of it is lies. It's terrible."

After a late arrival, Justin Bieber bypassed most of the press line and quickly entered the theater.

"Justin Bieber Believe," which opens in U.S. theaters Christmas Day, captures a behind-the-scenes look at the 19-year-old star. Bieber will release a new album, "Journals," on Dec. 23. □

Creators of 'Riverdance' plan to tour new show

MARK KENNEDY

AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The folks behind "Riverdance" have a new thundering Irish dance show poised to tour North America, but don't dare call it "Riverdance II."

"Heartbeat of Home" integrates the Emerald Isle's signature high-stepping with the tango, the flamenco, Cuban salsa and even hip-hop, reflecting the growing multiculturalism of Ireland since "Riverdance" debuted two decades ago.

"We felt that together with the fusion of other cultures, we could broaden out the base and embrace and display what 20 years have done to Irish music and dance," said producer Moya Doherty.

The new show kicks off at the Ed Mirvish Theatre in Toronto next month, where it runs from Jan. 21-March 2. Then it makes stops in Chicago's Oriental Theatre from March 4-16, Detroit's Fisher Theatre from March 18-23 and Boston's Wang Theater from March

25-April 6.

The show features about 30 dancers and a 10-piece band playing a score written by Golden Globe-nominated composer Brian Byrne, who created the score for the film "Albert Nobbs." Lyrics and the narrative are by novelist Joseph O'Connor.

The first part of the show is built around a sea voyage of people leaving one country for another. The second half features the mixing of cultures in this new land. □

'Duck Dynasty' fans react to Robertson's hiatus

JOHN ROGERS

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When the A&E network suspended "Duck Dynasty" patriarch Phil Robertson for disparaging gay people, it may have followed a time-honored TV tradition of quickly silencing a star who, for better or worse, speaks his mind. But in doing so it also ruffled the feathers of possibly millions of fans of its most popular show.

Fourteen hours after it was learned that Robertson had been placed on indefinite "hiatus" for telling GQ magazine, among other things, that gays are headed to hell, more than a half-million people liked an impromptu Facebook page demanding the show be boycotted until he returns.

Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, who had her picture taken with Robertson just last month, complained that his free-speech rights were being trampled. Bobby Jindal, governor of the state of Louisiana, where the show is filmed, complained that Miley Cyrus got a pass for twerking on TV while Phil got shown the door.

T-shirts, of course, went on the market with the words "I Don't Give a Duck About



This 2012 photo released by A&E shows, from left, Phil Robertson, Jase Robertson, Si Robertson and Willie Robertson from the A&E series, "Duck Dynasty."

Associated Press

A or E, Bring Back Phil."

"It's a show that is promoting clean living and good moral values, and that's something we need more of today," one of the program's many fans, Rick Peter of Vernon, British Columbia, Canada, told The Associated Press.

It's also a show that 67-year-old Robertson, who sports a beard that seemingly should qualify him for immediate mem-

bership in the rock group ZZ Top, is at the center of. When or if he'll return — or if he'll ever really go away, however — is an open question.

"Duck Dynasty" is on hiatus until Jan. 15, and a network spokesman said Thursday that nine of next season's 10 episodes have already been filmed. That means Robertson likely isn't needed in front of the camera before next March, by

which time this whole crisis may have blown over.

And blow over it will, eventually, says veteran Hollywood crisis publicist Howard Bragman, who added that Robertson will likely return to the show as well, perhaps after making a heartfelt apology.

"There's too much money at stake," said Bragman, vice president of reputation.com. "Although he plays kind of a hick on TV, I don't think he's dumb. I think he gets what's at stake here. And I hope people on his team, the network and his producers get the message that what he did was wrong."

The Robertson family released a statement on the Duck Commander website Thursday evening in which they expressed thanks for prayers and support. The statement said though some of Robertson's comments were coarse, "his beliefs are grounded" in the Bible and he "is a Godly man."

"We are disappointed that Phil has been placed on hiatus for expressing his faith," the statement said. "We have had a successful working relationship with A&E but as a family, we cannot imagine the show

going forward without our patriarch at the helm. We are in discussions with A&E to see what that means for the future of Duck Dynasty."

Robertson and his extended family became wealthy manufacturing duck calls and were turned into TV and pop culture stars by "Duck Dynasty," which has set cable ratings records for a non-fiction series.

"Duck Dynasty" is often the highest-rated cable show on television, and an episode last August that drew nearly 12 million viewers was the highest-rated of any show, cable or broadcast, that week.

Asked his definition of sinful behavior by GQ, Robertson replied, "Start with homosexual behavior and just go from there."

Then he continued, "Don't be deceived. Neither the adulterers, the idolaters, the male prostitutes, the homosexual offenders, the greedy, the drunkards, the slanderers, the swindlers — they won't inherit the kingdom of God. Don't deceive yourself. It's not right." Although his suspension won quick praise from gay rights groups, it offended people like Peter, who says conservative views like his are often overlooked by Hollywood and the news media.

"I think we're getting a little bit tired of that pro-gay sentiment that's out there in the media and it's time to fight back," he said.

Randy Schmidt of Illinois agreed, saying that while gay people can be happy that some states have granted them the right to marry, "I find it unnecessary to flaunt it all over the media." Ultimately, it doesn't matter what conservative fans may think, said another veteran crisis publicist, Michael Levine. A&E had no choice but to suspend Robertson, he said. If the network didn't, it would have had to deal with complaints from gay rights groups that would have made advertisers skittish and damaged the "Duck Dynasty" brand. □

DeGeneres hopes for 'Bridesmaids' sequel, role

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ellen DeGeneres wants to be in "Bridesmaids 2."

The returning Oscar host says she's working with "Bridesmaids" director Paul Feig to promote the Academy

Awards because she's hoping for a part in the "Bridesmaids" sequel, even though no such film has been announced.

In a video released late Thursday by the film academy, the 55-year-old funny woman says: "Two plus two: great Oscar promo, 'Bridesmaids 2,' cha-



In this April 29, 2013 file photo, TV host Ellen DeGeneres arrives at the season 4 premiere of "Arrested Development" in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

the movie's groundbreaking success in 2011. The director's most recent film, □

What Is Good Teaching?



JOE NOCERA
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In 2006, an idealistic New York public school teacher named Kevin Greer joined the faculty of an idealistic new high school, Brooklyn Community Arts and Media. Greer had previously taught English to 12th-grade honors students at Dewitt Clinton, a huge high school in the Bronx. At BCAM, which hoped to inspire students with an arts-driven curriculum, he would be teaching ninth-graders. Most of the students had not chosen BCAM, but had simply been assigned to the school. They weren't nearly as self-motivated as Greer's former students. Many if not most of them read below grade level. Greer's first approach to teaching these students was to refuse to concede to their obvious difficulties. He taught Plato and lectured about such things as "the rhetorical strategy of repetition of a phrase at the beginning of clauses. We call it anaphora." He seemed distant from the students, and they reacted in kind, yawning or talking among themselves. Greer knew he was not getting through to them. He was frustrated.

Three years later, when members of this first BCAM class were seniors, Greer decided to teach a poetry class revolving around William Blake's "Songs of Innocence and of Experience." This time, however, his demeanor was completely different. He engaged the students by asking them what their own definition of poetry was - and they responded eagerly. He was more relaxed and more confident.

"I had to learn how to really break things down," he told me recently. "I had to learn to work on several levels at a time." Because, after all, he had students of various abilities in his classes. I know these details about Kevin Greer's classroom performance because I recently saw a documentary about BCAM that has been passed from teachers' group to teachers' group, from reformers to union executives, like samizdat. The film, called "The New Public" and produced and directed by a filmmaker named Jillian Gunther, tracks that first BCAM class in both the class' first and last years at the school.

Once she finished the film, Gunther sent it around the various film festivals. None of them bit. "The New Public" was shown once on PBS, but aside from that,

it has not been seen widely. Instead, teachers - as well as those who teach teachers - have slowly found out about it and have embraced it.

Partly this is because it is the rare film that sympathetically conveys how hard it is to be a teacher in an inner-city school. "The New Public" not only shows what goes on in the classroom - which can be rough if the teacher can't manage the classroom - but she also goes into the homes of the students she has focused on. There, the odds that the students are trying to overcome are made abundantly clear.

But it is also because the movie is an unwitting primer on how to teach disadvantaged students. There are teachers in the movie who know how to connect with their students, and teachers who don't. Teachers College at Columbia University liked the film so much that it is creating a companion curriculum, so the film can be used to help train teachers. Until Gunther's movie came along, Teachers College used to show "The Wire" to give prospective teachers a feel for what it's like to teach in a disadvantaged community.

"What is good teaching?" asked Anand Marri, a professor at Teachers College who has championed the film. "Is teaching different in the Bronx versus the suburbs? How much do you start with where the students are?" For the most part, these elemental questions are ones that schools of education don't ask nearly enough.

The lack of teacher training in education schools has also been borne out recently by a new report by the National Council on Teacher Quality, entitled "Training Our Future Teachers." The question the group asked was a simple one: Do education schools teach classroom management? The answer was: not very much.

The group examined 122 teacher-preparation programs and found that while most programs could say they had classroom management as part of their curriculum, classroom management strategies rarely received "the connected and concentrated focus they deserve." What's more, "instruction is generally divorced from practice (and vice versa) in most programs, with little evidence that what gets taught gets practiced."

Education schools, says Kate Walsh, who leads the group, "don't see their job as training teachers. They see their job as creating professional identity." As the country continues to struggle with education reform, it seems obvious that education schools need to change, so that prospective teachers walk into their first classroom knowing how to teach. Maybe "The New Public" can help bring about that change.

NOTE: In an earlier column, I incorrectly wrote that the University of California, Berkeley, had raised \$3 billion in two years. In fact, it has raised \$2.9 billion over an eight-year span. □



Candy Crush And Mr. Christie



GAIL COLLINS
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For the past couple of months I have been in the thrall of a game called Candy Crush Saga. It's about matching little colored thingies on your iPad or phone. I am not going to explain it in any more depth, because that would just make this whole discussion more humiliating.

However, if you stick with me, I am going to try to use it to make a sweeping point about public policy, ending with some severe questions about the political career of New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie.

About the game: It's been played about 150 billion times over the past year. There is no reward for winning; you just advance to another level in an ever-growing chain of chocolate mountains and lemonade lakes. I told you this was embarrassing. I used to be addicted to playing BrickBreaker on my cellphone, and I now recall those days as my own personal version of Athens in the Age of Pericles.

I am only modestly comforted by the fact that half the people I know all seem to be in the same ditch. My sister Mary Ann got lost in the game while she was parked in a shopping mall, until

a woman started banging rather urgently on her window.

"She said she wanted to make sure I was OK, because I was sitting with the car running and my head in my hand for a long time. I thanked her and said I was texting," said Mary Ann. "I was too embarrassed to say I was playing Candy Crush."

"But also," she added rather defensively, "I was listening to NPR." Now, here's the thing. Candy Crush is free, but if you get stuck on a level, you can purchase extra moves, extra turns, extra weapons. The creators - a London-based company called King - won't reveal how much money they make on this gimmick, but the consulting firm Think Gaming estimates it's more than \$900,000 a day.

What would people do if they actually had a chance of winning something? This brings us to Chris Christie. Earlier this year, Christie signed a bill legalizing Internet gambling in New Jersey. The idea was to help resuscitate the Atlantic City economy and raise a projected \$150 million in tax revenue. Very few people believe the state will really make that much, but the number did help Christie to run for re-election waving what appeared to be a balanced budget.

The law went into effect a few weeks ago. Now, state residents can go online, create an account with one of the sponsoring casinos and gamble on all the casino games - blackjack, poker, slot machines, etc. - in the comfort of their homes.

How many of you think this is a good plan?

So far, New Jerseyites have created more than 90,000 casino accounts even though many banks and credit card companies are wary of getting involved.

You know that it's quickly going to get easier and easier to play, and that more and more states will want to get in the act, sniffling it was there. □

those new tax dollars. "This reminds me of the early '90s when Iowa introduced the first riverboat casino. Within weeks Illinois started its own legislation, and soon the river was loaded with competitors," said Earl Grinols, an economist at Baylor University who has written on gambling issues. Nevada and Delaware already have limited Internet gambling. Congress is looking at bills to create a national Internet gambling system, some of them proposed by Tea Party conservatives.

Fighting to stem the tide, we have the Coalition to Stop Internet Gambling, financed by Sheldon Adelson, the billionaire casino owner, who told Forbes that his "moral standard compels me to speak" and that he is prepared to spend "whatever it takes" to keep casino gambling out of people's bedrooms. (This is the same guy who promised last year to spend "whatever it takes" to defeat Barack Obama.) Lined up on the other side are big casino owners like MGM Resorts and Caesars Entertainment, as well as Donald Trump, Person With His Name on a Casino.

The whole idea of Internet gambling is enough to make you question the potential of Christie for national office. There is no possible way the country could be improved by giving people a greatly expanded freedom to gamble for money in their pajamas. Some day in the near future, you may look back nostalgically on the time when your grandfather did not have a slot machine connection in his bedroom.

"Slot machines are the crack cocaine of gambling," said Grinols. This cannot possibly be a step in the right direction.

I speak from the experience of a person who spent \$32 last month buying extra turns for a game that involves moving bits of candy around an iPad. Just because it was there. □

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